NOTES

1. Herman Giliomee. Unpublished paper delivered at Leverkeusen Conference, October 1988.
2. Herman Giliomee. 'Open Letter to an ANC Member', in *Die Suid Afrikaan*, February 1988. See also reply by Z. Pallo Jordan, 'Why won't the Afrikaners Rely on Democracy' in the same issue.
3. Herman Giliomee. Op.Cit.
4. F. Engels, 'Letter to H. Starkenburg, 25 January 1894', in Marx and Engels *Selected Correspondence*, London 1943, p.229
5. See for example: ANC Department of Information and Publicity, *Apartheid — Colonialism of a Special Type*, London 1985.
6. Selden, *Table Talk*, London 1927, as quoted in Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, New York 1964, p.153.
7. Karl Marx in two articles written with reference to India in June 1853 and July 1853 respectively says, inter alia: 'All the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as the successive action in Hindustan may appear, did not go deeper than its surface. England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing'. In the second article he comments: 'England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one constructive, the other regenerating — the annihilation of old Asiatic society and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia'. In *The First Indian War of Independence, 1857-1859*, K. Marx and F. Engels, Moscow, 1975, p.14 and p30.
8. The phrase is derived from Marx in *Capital*, Volume I. At page 734 Marx penned the following passage: 'The proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil ...' K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol.I, Moscow 1961, p.734.
9. In 1986 the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria published a report decrying the linkages between racism and capitalism. Members of the Anglo American Corporation's Board of Directors (e.g. Dr Zac de Beer) have repeatedly expressed disquiet on this score and their determination to de-link the two by creating greater opportunities for black business.
10. Sam C. Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa*, Manchester, 1982, p.67.
11. The term was first employed by Arendt Lijphart, the principle theorizer of 'Consociationism' in an article in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol IV, p.10, 1971. Cf Lijphart, A. *Cultural Diversity and Theories of Integration*.

REPORT ON THE
ANC-SOVIET SOCIAL SCIENTISTS SEMINAR
Moscow, February 21st-24th, 1989
(PART ONE)

CONTENTS — PART ONE

Report on the ANC-Soviet Social Scientists Seminar
Moscow, February 21st-24th, 1989

1.1 The arrangements for the seminar arose from the previous one, held in March 1987. Originally we were planning to meet in May 1988. Owing to a number of circumstances this was postponed until December 1988. Unfortunately the dates coincided with the funeral of the late Comrade Johnny Makatini. We therefore postponed the seminar until February 1989.

On this occasion we would be discussing only one topic, *The National Question*. Our original delegation, appointed in April 1988, was as follows:
a) Z. Pallo Jordan
b) Zola Skweyiya
c) Ivy Motsepe
d) Ben Magubane
e) Rob Davies
In preparation for the event a number of papers were solicited from members of the delegation on the theme. In the upshot we had to drop Comrade Ivy Motsepe for the 1989 delegation and in her stead appoint Comrade H. Jack Simons.

1.2. By mutual agreement with our Soviet counterparts papers were made available to them in advance. The following papers were written:
a) The National and Colonial Question in South Africa — A Survey (Z. Pallo Jordan).
b) Reflections on the National Question (Ben Magubane).
c) Current Ruling Class Post-Apartheid Theories and National Liberation (Rob Davies).
d) The Nation, Democracy and Ethnicity (Z. Pallo Jordan).
e) South Africa — The Civil War Scenario (HJ Simons).
In addition to these we provided the following papers written within our movement as background papers to enrich the discussions.
a) The Working Class and the National Democratic Revolution (Joe Slovo).
b) The Nature of the South African Ruling Class (ANC Research Department).
c) The Constitutional Dimension (Albie Sachs).
d) The African Petit-Bourgeoisie — A New Look (Z. Pallo Jordan).
e) The ANC Constitutional Guidelines

1.3 The arrangement was that the main body of the delegation (four persons) would travel from Lusaka and would be joined by Comrade Ben Magubane in Moscow. Owing to his age and ill-health, Comrade Jack Simons was unable to join the delegation at the last minute. Both Comrades Zola Skweyiya and Ben Magubane did not turn up. We have still to receive satisfactory explanations for these failures. Both comrades were timeously advised of the travel arrangements and at no stage indicated their unavailability. Consequently, the ANC delegation was reduced to two participants, Comrades Z. Pallo Jordan and Rob Davies. Needless to say our Soviet counterparts were very disappointed and were compelled to make a number of last-minute adjustments to take account of this new situation. Comrade Simon Makana joined the ANC delegation as a full participant and was able to arrange for two ANC students, Comrades Isaac and Themba, to join us as observers.

1.4 The Soviet delegation was led by Comrade Vassilly Solidovnikov and consisted of the following:
a) Irina Filatova
b) Alexei Makarov
c) Slava Tetekin
d) Comrade Anna (Expert on Namibia)
At one session we were joined by Comrade Victor Gorodnov from the Africa Institute.

The Soviet delegation submitted five papers in all. These were:
a) Correlation of National and Social Tasks in the South African Revolution (Vassilly Solidovnikov).
b) The Ethno-National Factor in Independent African States' Political Life Today (Irina Filatova).
c) On the Formation of the South African Nation (A. Makarov).
d) Future Prospects (A. Makarov).
e) The National Issue in South Africa and Prospects of a Political Settlement of the South African Problem (LA Demkina and LN Rytov).
Unfortunately, the last two authors were not participant in the seminar and therefore could not defend their views when their paper was discussed.

1.5. We had agreed on the agenda set out below, to cover six sessions to run in this order:
a) The National Question — to discuss the papers written by Comrades Pallo, Ben Magubane, Solidovnikov, Filatova and Makarov respectively.
b) The Present Conjuncture — to discuss the paper written by Jack Simons.
c) Post Apartheid Scenarios — to discuss the papers written by Rob and Alexei Makarov.
d) Briefing for Activists of the Solidarity Committee and the Soviet Press.
Each session would last three hours with a tea-break in between. By mutual agreement Comrade Solidovnikov was appointed chairman for all the sessions.

2.1. In his opening remarks Comrade Solidovnikov stressed the importance the Soviet social scientists attached to these meetings. Since our last seminar in 1987, he noted two significant developments: the growing influence of the ANC among the whites, including the Afrikaners; and the commencement of the process of decolonisation of Namibia.

He pointed to the new political-cultural climate in the Soviet Union. There is no longer a monolithic point of view to which all scholars must submit. In the present day Soviet social scientists are encouraged to express their individual points of view which will sometimes be at variance with each other. He cited instances of Soviet scholars on Africa who have rejected concepts such as neo-colonialism'; 'countries of socialist orientation' and seriously question the need for armed struggles in the colonial national liberation struggle; and some even call into question the very concept of 'class struggle'.

He regretted the propaganda uses that were being made of such differences by hostile elements in the western media, but assured us that the essentials of the Soviet Union's policy remain unchanged. He pointed out that there was, however, a broad consensus among social scientists in the Soviet Union on apartheid. All accept that it has outlived its time and that the ANC's broad strategy is correct. Areas in which one found divergent opinions were those affecting the ANC's vision of the post-apartheid society — on such issues as the land question, the political system after liberation, the speed at which economic change could be effected, etc. There was also concern regarding the much-talked-about differences within the ANC leadership.

2.2. In his opening remarks Comrade Z. Pallo Jordan expressed the thanks of the ANC to our Soviet comrades for the opportunity afforded us to meet again to exchange views on issues vital to our struggle. He expressed our profound apologies for the reduction in the size of our delegation and any inconvenience this may have occasioned. He stressed that the ANC social

scientists value greatly these seminars because they can only enhance our understanding of the common struggle we are jointly engaged in. We, too, had noted that mischief-makers have seized on the differences that have been aired between Soviet and ANC social scientists and their wish to attribute this to a gradual parting of the ways. Both sides participating in this seminar know that this is false.

The spirit of glasnost and perestroika encourages us to examine and re-examine our basic assumptions and to continuously test their validity in theoretical discourse and debate. This is wholly consistent with the Marxist approach. He noted that V.I. Lenin in his *Philosophical Notebooks* remarks that 'the dialectic is the soul of Marxism'. Dialectics in its original meaning implied debate. It is only through this process that we arrive at truth. Debate can therefore only serve to consolidate and strengthen the solidarity between our respective peoples. We will therefore express our views frankly and expect that this will be reciprocated. Even if the exchanges become hard-hitting, we shall not fear this nor be resentful. In the last instance we are on the same side of the barricades, comrades-in-arms in a common struggle.

He concluded by saying that the Soviet people had thus far made two great revolutions. The first was the October Revolution, when the working class seized power. The second was the industrialisation of a backward country and the construction of socialism. In the course of both these, unplanned mishaps, mistakes, errors and even crimes were committed. But our awareness of these should not diminish our estimation of the actual achievements.

History may some day judge perestroika and glasnost as the third revolution. We have always held and shall continue to think that there is much to be learnt from the experiences of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, not least as regards the solution of the national question.

2.3. Presentation of the papers followed the order set out in 1.5. Since Comrade Ben Magubane was absent, Rob Davies presented his paper on his behalf. The presentation took up an entire session.

3.1. Discussion of the papers carried on into the second and third sessions. Among the questions raised for discussion were:
a) *Solidovnikov:* While he agrees with the basic analysis in both the ANC papers there is an issue that remains unresolved for him. If, as we argue, there is a dominant white community and an oppressed black community, how can we speak of 'one nation'? Do not these two communities in fact represent an oppressor and oppressed nation? Secondly, how do we reconcile the issue of a number of languages within one nation?
b) *Makarov:* On the whole the SACP thesis of internal colonialism is well-substantiated. Nonetheless, he feels that the solutions proposed are not consistent with the colonialism analogy. How do we propose to uproot the specifically colonial aspects when solving the national question in South Africa?
c) *Themba:* What accounts for the change in the 1930 formulation of the Native Republic Theses in the 1932 ECCI Letter to the CPSA?
d) *Solidovnikov:* Should we not differentiate between the 'nation state' as a political entity that comes into existence under a number of historical circumstances and the 'nation' as an historically-formed community sharing common culture, language, territory and economy?
e) He has not seen the relevant data on the social base of the ANC, on the one hand, and the SACP on the other. Can he be enlightened on this issue? The growing strength of the democratic trade unions is a feature of the present phase. These do not speak only in terms of national liberation but also in terms of socialism. How do these rebound on the character of the two organisations in the national liberation alliance?

f) *Filatova:* We should perhaps examine whether there are or are not purely national problems, which exist in and of themselves with no reference to the economic base.
g) *Slava:* Are so-called ethnic and national conflicts in fact not different ways in which the economic and social contradictions in society find expression? Could it be that contradictions that arise in the course of development of a society transpose or translate themselves into ethnic terms even though their source is non-ethnic?
h) *Rob Davies:* There are three levels of abstraction in the papers in in our discussion. First, the level of conceptualisation — is there a nation, or is there a nation in the making? Second, is the level relating to the implications and consequences of certain policy options — will they or won't they stoke up problems that could assume an ethnic character in the future? The third level relates to the tactical options available to the movement at the present moment — will certain concessions on our part facilitate the transfer of power? These three levels must be seen as separate and kept separate. It is a mistake to set out from one level and then move into another or to conflate the three into one.
i) *Filatova:* Suggests that we discuss the papers in terms of these three levels, looking at the first, then the second, and so on.
j) *Makana:* When the democratic state resolves the economic discrepancies between the various communities will that not remove the basic causes of ethnic conflict?
k) *Rob Davies:* There is a basic contradiction, which is seldom addressed, in the South African socio-economic formation. On the one hand the productive forces and their development under capitalism have generated numerous centripetal forces — economic unification, creation of a common society, common cultural patterns, etc. While on the other hand, capitalist productive relations have generated a segregative polity and are sustained by it. The question that needs to be posed is: Does the development of capitalism enhance or impede the process of the emergence of a single nation? Dependent on the answer, what measures does the democratic state have to take to unravel these?
l) *Filatova:* What contradictions does Makarov find between the Freedom Charter and the ANC Constitutional Guidelines?

3.2. The two papers presented were those by Comrades Rob Davies and Alexei Makarov. During the discussions the following questions and issues arose:
a) *Solidovnikov:* Firstly, what is the role of the political representatives of monopoly capital within the ruling bloc? Sometimes they criticise Botha. Can they in fact force the pace of change? Secondly, is it any longer meaningful to draw a distinction between Anglo and Afrikaner capital? Lastly, how much support did the Kwa-Natal Indaba enjoy among the white electorate?
b) *Makarov:* First, the ANC envisages a change in political power but does not advocate a drastic change in the productive relations. The ANC guidelines apparently envisage monopoly capital playing some role in the post-apartheid society. Is it then correct for the ANC to reject the demands of the monopolies out of hand? Secondly, today there are two major forces that can exert pressure on the Pretoria regime — the ANC-led alliance of democratic forces and the monopolists supported by imperialism. In this sense, is there not a short-term common interest shared by monopoly capital and the national liberation movement? Would it not be tactically wise to arrive at a short-term unity between these two forces? Lastly, the Kwa-Natal Indaba has some positive features — it attempts to accommodate the needs of the various ethnic communities. Can't the national liberation movement give these serious consideration? He does not clearly understand the powers of the proposed legislative chamber. Will it not have the power to enforce laws favouring the majority?

c) *Makana:* The ANC's understanding of reform is that there has been no meaningful reform in South Africa.

d) *Isaac:* In his paper Comrade Makarov hints at liberal forces that could replace Botha. Could he identify these?

e) *Anna:* We need to pay attention to the impact of reform on the white ruling bloc. As it is presently constituted, there is no constituency for reform within the ruling bloc. Does this not mean that real reform will have to await the appearance of such a constituency?

f) *Pallo:* The issue of reform needs to be addressed with greater care. There are three basic types of reforms that have taken place. First, the cosmetic reforms initiated by the regime to give apartheid a facelift, as it were. This would include such measures as the repeal of the Immorality Act, removal of 'whites only' signs, etc. None of this affects the essentials of the system, though they might marginally affect the quality of life of individuals. The second category are reforms initiated in response to the structural changes in the economy. These often overlap with the third category — reforms that are the conquest of the mass movement. One can include among these such actions as the Riekert Commission, the changes leading to the legalisation of the trade unions, etc. These have opened up spaces for the struggle and as such have consequences the regime has not anticipated.

g) *Rob:* Understood in the light Comrade Pallo has cast on them, there is no problem in accepting that there are reforms. The danger is that often those who speak of reforms seek to convey the image of a process which, by small incremental changes, will finally lead to the cumulative result of apartheid being dismantled.

3.3 The Paper written by the two Soviet Social Scientists, Demikina and Rytov, was also submitted for discussion though the authors were not present (Vide attached paper by Demikina and Rytov). In the discussion that ensued the following points were made:

a) *Pallo:* The approach adopted by the authors seems to conflate the three levels of abstraction, previously identified. They seem to have fitted their premises to their conclusions. The premises are mere assertions for which no demonstrative evidence is adduced. From the outset they have excluded certain courses of action as impractical and consequently limit their options to a handful, as if these are in fact the only ones available.

b) *Rob:* We need to draw a distinction between the consideration of viable tactical options among which the movement might be compelled to choose in a situation of *de facto* stalemate, (the authors proceed from the assumption that we are in such a situation) and theorising about the character of South Africa as a multi-ethnic/national country. The paper is in fact considering tactical options in the assumed *de facto* stalemate, but then seeks to ground them theoretically by asserting that South Africa is a multi-ethnic society. We cannot reject *a priori* the options they present, but the occasion has not yet arisen for the National Liberation Movement to give serious consideration to these options. When we judge the time to have arrived, we shall do so. But we shall accept them as such. The National Liberation Movement would explain to its constituency that these are options it is weighing up as a means of exploiting the transfer of power in a situation of unfavourable balance of forces. We will not seek to justify the examination of such options by adopting the theory of a multi-ethnic/national society.

d) *Makana:* Do we have to strike a balance between the new thinking and revolutionary struggle. Are the two compatible or incompatible?

e) *Makarov:* There is a view that the Soviet Union, like any other state, has to weigh up what its interests in any specific region are. After that it has to devise the means by which it hopes to realise these interests. Next, consider how these regional interests relate to its global interests. In this regard some in our Foreign Ministry are arguing that the best means of achieving our regional interests is through the peaceful resolution of conflicts through political means. This applies also to Southern Africa.

e) *Pallo:* There is an extent to which our language is a function of political bias. We have to liberate ourselves and language from the ideological hegemony of imperialism. A case in point is the phrase 'peaceful resolution of conflict' and 'peaceful change'. We need greater precision in the manner in which we express ourselves.

It is often said that the struggle for civil rights in the USA is an example of 'peaceful change'. The historical fact of the matter is that this change was anything but peaceful. It entailed a great deal of violence. One need only recall the lynchings, the bombings, the assassinations, the police batons and the dogs. *Those who sought change were peaceful;* those who resisted change were extremely violent.

In our case it is important that we take care not to fall into this ideological trap which implies that we who seek change be peaceful while those who resist it are permitted to be violent. Peaceful transition must mean both sides simultaneously laying down their arms. If it implies that the national liberation movement must unilaterally disarm, it can be dangerous.

3.4. Comrade Jack Simons' paper was not formally introduced and discussed. Comrade Rob Davies, however, read some notes Jack had prepared into the record. No discussion ensued.

4.1. Overall Assessment

The discussions were thorough-going and conducted with a rigour that permitted us to explore various facets of the issues. We benefited from the plurality of opinions among our Soviet counterparts, though we were unable to engage directly with those who have voiced opinions some of us found uncomfortable. Among our interlocutors there was a basic consensus around positions close to those of the ANC.

However, there was a fundamental divergence in the approaches of our respective delegations. The Soviet comrades, almost without exception, made ethnicity and nationality their starting point for analysis. Consequently, they kept returning to it as an autonomous category that can be understood only with reference to itself. There seemed also to be no appreciation of the social character of our movement and the relative weight of the different classes that are united under its banner. The understanding of our movement's programme, strategy and united front tactics consequently is rather mechanical and wooden. With ethnicity as a starting point, our Soviet colleagues tended to regard ethnic conflict as more or less inevitable — pre-ordained by fate as it were — and not susceptible to manipulation (for good or bad) by political forces.

The ANC delegation, as a result, was forced to repeat the theme that though ethnic feelings and affinities are components of the structures of many people's identity, and exist in the political culture of the masses, these are and exist in contention with numerous other alternative identities — as members of a class, of a church, of a community, of a political organisation, etc, which can have equal or even greater weight in determining political action.

The thrust of the national liberation movement is, therefore, to de-politicise ethnicity. It was our argument that most of the current conflicts and political demands which express themselves in ethnic terms are a function of the specific class ideologies that seek to manipulate aspects of popular consciousness for particular class goals. Thus in the present day, ethnicity is a function of politics and not the other way around. In the post-liberation period the issue would then become devising policies that take account of ethnic feelings while containing the possibilities of it becoming a flashpoint by timeously addressing

problems of uneven development, uneven distribution of resources, uneven levels of education, between and among regions of the country.

In opposition our Soviet interlocutors made repeated reference to the experience of India and other developing countries. There appeared to be no appreciation of the extent to which bourgeois leadership and ideological hegemony over the national movement in India placed limits on the national state's capacity to address such issues.

We discovered also that there is a fundamental misunderstanding of the character of bantustan hierarchies. Our colleagues appear to think that these are replicas of pre-colonial African hierarchies, with no understanding of their restructuring by the colonial-apartheid state. We talked at cross-purposes on this score for quite some time until it was cleared up.

During the discussion of the latter two papers, it emerged that our Soviet counterparts also have a misconception of the role of monopoly capital in the political economy of South Africa. The opinion was expressed that we might investigate the possibilities of a tactical alliance with monopoly capital on the basis of a common antipathy for apartheid. As a result there was also a misconception of the considerations that shaped our Constitutional Guidelines and determine our tactic of conducting a dialogue with elements of the Afrikaner establishment and monopoly capital. We did not sufficiently go into these for lack of time, but opportunities will have to be sought to explore them further.

4.2. There is an evident need for us to assist our Soviet comrades obtain more regular access to progressive South African journals, even those that do not reflect movement views. Thus far we have assisted them to make contact among liberal white academics and pro-regime opinion-makers and academics. Our Soviet colleagues themselves have expressed the desire to broaden such contacts to include progressive academics. The exact modalities of these can be discussed with people from home and the Soviets.

By mutual agreement both sides are working towards a second seminar towards the end of November, 1989.

The National and Colonial Question in South Africa
A Survey
by Z. Pallo Jordan

The National Question belongs to the political traditions rooted in the 'age of revolutions', inaugurated by the French Revolution of 1789, leading up to and including the modern struggle against colonialism.

It has centred on three sets of problems:
(i) the national oppression of a minority or majority in a single political unit;
(ii) the unification of disparate sections of a potential nation state; and
(iii) the problem of colonialism.

Historically, these were issues that came on to the political terrain in the context of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions and their aftermath in North America, Europe and South America during the 19th century.

The notion that nations had rights which they were entitled to claim in opposition to their rulers had its origins in the struggles against absolutism in post-renaissance Europe. Though struggles against tyranny are centuries old, what was new about post-renaissance Europe was the concept of sovereignty inherent in the people or the nation. Moreover, this sovereignty was held to be inalienable — in other words of the Constitution of the United States, these were 'God-given rights' collectively held by the people. Linked to this notion of collectively held rights was that of juridical equality.

The germination and development of these ideas are inextricably connected to the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The expansion of foreign trade after 1488 greatly accelerated the ability of the rising capitalist classes to accumulate wealth. As the French socialist, Jean Jaures was to comment:

> 'Sad irony of human history, the fortunes created at Bordeaux, at Nantes by the slave trade, gave the bourgeoisie that pride which needed liberty and contributed to human emancipation.'[1]

The classic bourgeois democratic revolution, waged under the banners of liberty and equality, were from the outset infected with a gross internal paradox because the classes that made these revolutions held other human beings in bondage. Thus the principles set out in the United States Constitution and the French Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen were all adopted with necessary reservations. In the case of the United States, they did not apply to indigenous Americans and people of African descent; in the French instance they did not apply in the French colonies.

Yet, as has been noted, when a revolutionary idea has seized the masses it becomes a material force. No idea of the bourgeois revolution was more subversive in its impact than that of equality. In both the English revolution and the French revolution the idea percolated down to the propertyless classes who made unsuccessful, and for the period, partially successful claims against property. The emancipation of the Jews in 1793 and the abolition of slavery in February 1794 were both the fruits of the all too brief Jacobin ascendancy which rested on the revolutionary sections of Paris populated by the sansculottes. Despite the reverses of the Thermidor, the emancipation of the Jews remained part of the legacy of the French revolution which Napoleon's armies carried into the rest of Europe. The freedom of the slaves, secured by their own efforts in the Haitian revolution of 1792, in tandem with the radical measures instituted by the Jacobins, had to be tenaciously defended against Napoleonic efforts to restore it. The harrowing losses suffered by the French expeditionary forces in Haiti finally convinced Napoleon to abandon the effort. Haiti became the first Negro Republic in modern times in 1803.

Though few of its authors intended it, the French Revolution brought in its wake two historical developments that are important to our theme: the emancipation of an oppressed minority within the French polity accompanied by an authentic colonial revolution in France's most prosperous colony. This paper shall be a survey of the evolution of the national and colonial question in relation to the two revolutionary traditions of modern times, bourgeois democracy and socialism, and how these traditions relate to the South African struggle.

The movement of the international working class associated with and inspired by the work of Marx and Engels has historically regarded the national struggles of oppressed and colonised peoples as an integral part of the unfolding world revolutionary process. The Europe of Marx and Engels' youth was the site of momentous political and social struggles as young nations sought to free themselves from foreign domination, the rising middle classes strove to throw off the constricting institutions of feudalism, and the emergent working class began to assert its claims to social justice.

The Napoleonic Wars had not managed to change the political face of Europe east of the Rhine. Though the restoration of the Bourbons could not affect the substance of bourgeois power in France itself, the system imposed on the rest of Europe by the Congress of Vienna conspired to prolong the agony of a continent over-ripe for bourgeois-democratic transformation. The diplomacy of Metternich and the military power of Tsarist Russia jointly underwrote and sustained the obsolete institutions of decaying feudalism. More significant, however, was the decline of the revolutionary élan of the big bourgeoisie of Europe.

Like its counterparts in Britain and France, the bourgeoisie in the rest of Europe had accumulated vast riches under absolutism. Bankers such as Nathan Rothschild had subvented the European aristocracies' wars against revolutionary France. Steel foundries had blossomed as the contending armies consumed cannon and other armaments, in turn generating the growing demand for coal as an efficient fuel. The profits accrued were invested in factories and mills, setting in motion the ever spiralling cycle of industrial development. Economic development and growth however brought with them their corollary - the proletariat.

The big bourgeoisie recognised that revolution had destroyed the constraints of feudalism placed on trade and industry and had unified the national market by the creation of national institutions. However, it had also called the masses into politics and in the process roused expectations that bourgeois society could not accommodate. The radicalism of the French sansculottes and its boldest political representatives during 1793 and '94 persuaded the bourgeoisie that it was wiser to seek an accommodation with the feudal aristocracy than enter the risky enterprise of revolution. Commenting on this turn of events Karl Marx wrote:

> 'The German bourgeoisie developed so sluggishly, timidly and slowly that at the moment it menacingly confronted feudalism and absolutism, it saw menacingly confronting it the proletariat and all sections of the middle class whose interests and ideas were related to those of the proletariat (...) from the first the German bourgeoisie was inclined to betray the people and compromise with the crowned representatives of the old society (...) The big bourgeoisie which was all along anti-revolutionary, concluded a defensive and offensive alliance with the reactionary forces, because it was afraid of the people, i.e. of the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie'.[2]

As with the bourgeois political revolution, so too with the struggle for national emancipation. The capitulation of the

bourgeoisie resulted in the survival of national oppression. In Poland and Hungary, Metternich, assisted by Tsarist troops, suppressed the national risings. In the Balkans, bourgeois Britain, playing its own Machiavellian game in defence of empire, supported the Ottoman Sultans to suppress Slavic nationalism, while close to home it crushed the Irish nationalists. The counter-revolutionary compact left power in the hands of the most conservative social strata. The German bourgeoisie found an agent to effect cautious reforms and to unify the national market in the person of Otto van Bismarck, even today praised as the 'white revolutionary'.

By a shrewd oscillation between diplomacy and wars of conquest, Bismarck succeeded in uniting the majority of the German states, with the exception of Austria, under the Prussian monarchy by 1870. In the south of Europe Count Cavour was able to play an equally able hand to unite Italy by employing a combination of diplomacy, military invasions and controlled insurrections. As Engels remarked of the period:

'The period of revolution from below was concluded for the time being, there followed a period of revolutions from above.'[3]

When the working people of Paris attempted to establish the first proletarian state in 1871, Europe under the economic domination of big capital presented a patchwork of large national states, each in its turn holding smaller nations in thrall.

The Polish and the Irish situations were the most politically charged throughout the 19th century, attracting the support of both democratic republicans and socialists. Indeed, the first meeting of the International Workingmen's Association, later dubbed the First International, devoted most of its time to solidarity with the Polish cause. The struggle for Polish emancipation was to assume a special significance for the working class movement because it was in relation to it that Marx and Engels coined the principle:

'A nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations'.[4]

The Tradition of Marx and Engels

Because Ireland, Poland and the Balkans were the storm centres of the struggle for national liberation on the European continent, many of the writings of Marx and Engels on the national question relate to these countries. Colonialism, especially in India, turned their eyes to these other theatres of intense anti-colonial struggle. It was with specific reference to India that Marx and Engels elaborated their critique of colonialism and began defining the place of the anti-colonial struggle within an international strategy for socialism.

While they made no apologies for the barbarities of colonialism, both the founders of scientific socialism attributed a historically progressive role to it. This view was first expressed by Engels commenting on the French conquest of Algeria in 1848:

'... after all the modern bourgeois, with civilisation, industry, order and at least relative enlightenment following him, is preferable to the feudal lord ...'[5]

Marx, writing on India, even more explicitly, though less one-sidedly, states:

'England had to fulfil a double mission in India; one destructive, the other regenerating — the annihilation of old Asiatic society and to lay the material foundation of western society in Asia'.[6]

To 'lay the foundation of western society', colonialism first undermined India's native cotton industry and reduced the subcontinent to an agricultural colony of Britain. The old manufacturing towns were depopulated as thousands of workless artisans migrated to the countryside in search of a living. The British bourgeoisie, who achieved power by ending feudal landlordism, became the principal external bulwark of landlordism in India.

The colonial regime did, however, impose political unity on the country. For purposes of export it was compelled to build railroads linking the hinterland to the coast and called into existence a class of Indians reared in the western intellectual tradition. This progressive impact, according to Marx, though an unintended result, was nonetheless a reality whose consequences could be very far-reaching.

Viewed from Marx's perspective, colonialism had two contradictory, yet integrally related tendencies.

The one is to undermine pre-capitalist modes of production; the other is to conserve these archaic institutions by restructuring them for its own purposes. Yet the fundamental regenerative impact was that it would transform the colonial people themselves. Notwithstanding his withering critique of British colonialism in India, Marx concludes that 'whatever may have been the crimes of England, she was the unconscious tool of history'.[7]

Two historical processes dominate the period separating the Paris Commune from the outbreak of the First World War — the growth and consolidation of European colonial empires in Africa and Asia, and the disintegration of the land-based multinational empires in Europe. The Berlin Conference of 1884-85 marked the heyday of colonialism, when by mutual agreement the dominant capitalist powers carved up the African continent amongst themselves. For the vast majority of the peoples of the world the national question thenceforth assumed the form of the colonial question.

It was the revolutionary movements in the multinational empires of Europe who were compelled to grapple most seriously with the national question and its resolution. After 1885 it also had to become the concern of the British, the French and the Germans. National oppression not only violated democratic principles but was specifically employed by the dominant classes as a device to sow chauvinism and national arrogance among the exploited classes of their 'own' nations. White racism in relation to the colonised peoples was added to this armoury to persuade the exploited to become reconciled to their status by a vicarious identification with their rulers.

In both the empire of the Tsars and that of the Hapsburgs the ruling classes held their power by force of arms, repressing any national movements with unbridled brutality. The language, cultural and religious rights of the smaller nations were regarded with contempt if not overtly suppressed. Organised bands of reactionary thugs periodically conducted massacres of Jews, Armenians, Muslims and others in Tsarist Russia. Though the Catholic Hapsburgs finally granted the Jews and other non-Christians legal equality, they suppressed all attempts by the oppressed nations to assert cultural or national rights. In the neighbouring Ottoman Empire, the peoples dominated by the Turks, whether Muslim or Christian, dared not raise the standard of nationhood for fear of the terrible retribution by the dominant Turks.

Two mainstreams of thought emerged from the debates on the national question in the Austrian and Russian revolutionary movements. The Austrian Social Democrats, led by Carl Renner, Otto Bauer and Victor Adler, espoused the concept of 'cultural autonomy'. Though this view won some supporters amongst the socialists of other countries, including Russia, the viewpoint that finally emerged as dominant within the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) was the concept of national self-determination.

Both these were attempts to respond to the multinational character of the states in question. The 'cultural autonomy school' held that it was historically retrogressive to seek the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire into a number of smaller national units. What was unjust about the political dispensation in Austro-Hungary, they argued, was the inequality among the constituent peoples. In this situation it was the task of Social Democrats to strive for the unity of the multinational working class of the empire, they said. Any other course would

promote disunity and reinforce national particularism. The socialists would achieve unity by fighting for the equality of all the national groups before the law and in all institutions of the state. The Austrian socialists' programme aimed at creating a state in which Germans, Magyars, Slavs, Jews, Czechs, Slovaks, Romanians and Italians would all have equal rights, while they would all be retained within one multinational state. The political institutions of such a state would be so re-arranged as to give equal representation to each national group in the central administration and each national language would have equal status in the schools and all state institutions. 'Cultural autonomy' envisaged each national group being permitted to manage its own affairs, especially in the cultural sphere.[8]

The 'cultural autonomy' school argued that their concept accommodated two realities of modern times — the abolition of national particularism, by bringing all these nations together in one state; and the need to abolish national oppression by basing unification on equality. In addition to these merits, the principles of autonomy retained the large state with its developed national economy, the collective heritage of all the national constituents, which might otherwise be broken up into tiny, less viable, economies.

The Bolshevik party, given that Tsarist Russia was the 'prison house of nations', had to address the relationship between national emancipation and the social revolution. For many years the debate in the Bolshevik Party ebbed and flowed, until one trend became dominant. During the course of these debates two divergent views emerged among adherents of the party. These differences reflected themselves in part in the positions adopted by two otherwise closely-linked revolutionaries of this period — Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg.

Support for the independence of Poland had been one of the cornerstones of the tradition associated with Marx and Engels since 1948. Rosa Luxemburg was among the first to argue against it, basing herself on the economic links between Poland and Russia. Her thinking as rendered by Herod was:

'... just as continued economic activity between Russian and Polish business interests tended to blur national lines at the social, economic and political level, so too would come about a similar community of interests between the developing Polish and Russian proletariats'.[9]

In her essay *Nationality and Autonomy*, published in 1907, Luxemburg, even more forthrightly, argues:

'In a society based on classes, the nation as a uniform social-political whole simply does not exist. Instead there exist within each nation classes with antagonistic interests and rights. There simply is no social arena — from the strongest material relationship to the most subtle moral one — in which the possessing classes and the self-conscious proletariat could take one and the same position ...'[10]

These views were echoed by Yuri Pyatakov, a Bolshevik, employing the pseudonym 'Kievsky':

'Defence of the fatherland belongs to the arsenal of our worst enemies ... We categorically refuse to understand how one can simultaneously be against defence of the fatherland and for self-determination; against the fatherland and for it'.[11]

In November 1915, Pytakov, Bosch and Bukharin placed before the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party eleven theses on the 'Rights of Nations to Self-Determination'. They argued, *inter alia*, that:

'The slogan *self-determination of nations* is first utopian, as it cannot be realised within the limits of capitalism. It is also harmful, as it is a slogan that sows illusions. In this respect it does not distinguish itself at all from the slogans on arbitration courts, disarmament and so on, which presuppose the possibility of so-called peaceful capitalism'.[12]

It was Lenin himself who took up the cudgels against this trend in a series of articles penned before and after 1914. Summarising the main thrust of Lenin's polemic on this issue, it may be rendered as follows:

- there is a fundamental distinction between the oppressive, aggressive nationalism of oppressor nations and that of oppressed nations;[13]
- the right of self-determination is a basic democratic right and must include the right of an oppressed nation to secede/separate from the oppressor nation;[14]
- even in the event that socialists of an oppressed nation seek union with the oppressor nation (as was the case with the Polish Social-Democrats led by Luxemburg), the socialists of the oppressor nation must nevertheless defend and support the right (but not the obligation) of the oppressed nation to secede.[15]

As opposed to the 'cultural autonomy' school, Lenin propounded the concept of national self-determination. This was finally adopted as the platform of the Bolsheviks.

Both the Leninist and the 'cultural autonomy' currents had based their arguments on Marxist principles, creatively applied to the specifics of the multinational empires of Russia and Austria respectively. Yet there were other socialists who tried to come to terms with national oppression by distorting Marxism. It is to these we must now turn.

The Second International and the Revisionists

The major capitalist powers had all become colonial powers by the last quarter of the 19th century. Except for a small minority of leftists among them, the Social Democrats of the leading imperialist countries evolved an elaborate apologia for colonialism. This was mainly theorised by the right wing of the German Social Democratic Party, which also professed Marxism. With a mechanical approach to historical materialism, they contended that since capitalism was historically progressive, and the expansion of this mode of production entailed colonial domination, colonialism was both inevitable and historically justified. Bernstein explicitly brought out the racist thinking underlying these ideas:

'But if it is not reprehensible to enjoy the product of tropical plantations, it cannot be so to cultivate such plantations ourselves. Not the whether, but the how, is here the decisive point. It is neither necessary that the occupation of tropical lands by Europeans should injure the natives ... nor has it hither-to usually been the case. Moreover, only a conditional right of savages to the land occupied by them can be recognised. The higher civilisation can claim a higher right. Not the conquest, but the cultivation of the land, gives historical legal title to its use'.[16]

At the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International in 1904, further arguments were marshalled by the right wing. Van Kol, a Dutch Social-Democrat, in his report argued that:

'... the new needs which will make themselves felt after the victory of the working class and its economic emancipation will make the possession of colonies necessary ...'[17]

Although they were defeated in the congress, the ideas of the right wing gained currency in the European Social Democratic movement, nurtured by a labour aristocracy that owed its economic status to imperialist profits.[18] Right wing politics had a basis in reality and not in theory alone.

Under the tutelage of the labour aristocracy, European social democracy accommodated itself to imperialism and national oppression. Such socialists invariably aligned themselves with their own ruling class on most international issues, culminating in the 'social patriotic fever' of August 1914.[19]

Some Tentative Conclusions

In 1914, as Europe stood poised on the brink of war, the continent presented a variety of state forms. Two of these, Britain and France, had come into being by revolution. Italy was a peculiar instance of a combination of revolutionary struggle and carefully engineered revolution from above. The majority of

states, however, were the outcome of defeated revolutions. Farther afield, the ascendant new capitalist countries, in the USA and Japan, the state forms had evolved from an alliance between merchant capital and slavery in the former, and a reformist aristocracy and merchant capital in the latter. These peculiar hybrids not only prospered but in time came to challenge European capitalism on the world arena.

The democratic republicans, socialists and communists of the 19th century had all believed that the democratic republic was the state form most compatible with developing capitalism. They had held that national oppression, national particularism and racial intolerance were feudal, pre-modern traits which marred the body politic of European states and would be eliminated by the imperatives of economic development.

The democrats, liberal and radical, socialists and communists, had been distinguished from the guardians of the old order by their unequivocal advocacy of equality amongst the peoples and defence of the rights of small nations. The ideological impact of imperialism and colonialism was to blur these distinctions. With the exception of a handful of revolutionary socialists and the communists, most European democrats, and even social democrats, had found ways to come to terms with the empirical fact of national and racial oppression. Some even invented intellectual arguments in their defence. The promise of liberty and equality, once held out by the bourgeois democratic revolutions, had not been fulfilled.

The Marx and Engels of the 1850s had projected a capitalist colonialism whose indirect impact would be the modernisation of backward regions of the world. Indeed, in a number of instances colonialism had produced progress. In India, for example, the British suppressed some of the more barbaric feudal customs (such as the suttee); disbanded the caste of Thuggee, who preyed on travellers and merchants; introduced modern science to India and united the sub-continent politically. But, after militarily defeating the old feudal ruling class, the British Raj resurrected it as a its principal ally and turned its wrath on the emergent Indian bourgeoisie, whom it regarded as a threat to its domination.

Similarly in China the British, French, Americans and Japanese imperialists opposed Chinese modernists and supported the moribund Manchu dynasty. In every colonial or semi-colonial country the imperialists deliberately preserved or revived archaic institutions as political props. The outcome of the destruction of the pre-capitalist order in the colonies was not the emergence of an indigenous bourgeois order but rather the imposition of foreign bourgeois rule which sought to annihilate the seeds of a rising indigenous capitalist class.

By 1914, in all the leading industrial nations, the bourgeoisie was indisputably at the helm of the economy. The history of each individual country had produced a distinctive set of alliances and a ruling bloc, so that it was difficult to define a specific constellation of political forces as typical of bourgeois economic hegemony. With the exception of France, all the leading European industrial nations were monarchies, with varying degrees of constitutional constraint. In the upshot the capitalist mode of production demonstrated in practice that it could thrive under a variety of political arrangements.

On the eve of the war, though a number of European nations had won independence, national oppression, national chauvinism and racial intolerance were at their peak. The development of capitalism had not had the effect of emancipating peoples. If anything, it had been the opposite. Ireland, the oldest British colony still groaned under the Union Jack; Poles, Czechs, Magyars, Slovaks and others were still excluded small nations, denied the right of statehood. They had been joined in this unenviable position by millions in Asia, Africa, Polynesia and the Caribbean, the colonised peoples so derisively dismissed as 'half-savage, half-child', by Kipling, the poet laureate of British imperialism. The solution of the national and colonial questions, uncompleted by the bourgeois revolution, was thus placed on the agenda of the epoch of socialist revolution.

This draws to a close our survey of the traditions until 1917. We now shall attempt to contextualise the debates in the South African left in relation to these traditions.

PART II

The late 19th century was the critical watershed of the South African economy. The opening of the mines — diamonds 1870, gold 1885 — raised the country out of its perennial near-bankruptcy by generalising the wage labour system, for the first time drawing in large numbers of Africans. These developments impacted on other areas of the economy, principally agriculture, where more efficient methods of labour exploitation were soon introduced. The centre of gravity of the economy shifted decisively and irrevocably from the countryside to the towns and the remaining pockets of pre-capitalist economies were marked out for extinction.

The revolutionary effect of all this was most pronounced on the African people themselves. Formerly divided amongst a number of discrete indigenous principalities, they were thrown together on the mines and in the towns, learnt new values and social habits in the same social milieu, thus making possible the emergence of a national consciousness.

Mining spurred economic development, but South Africa remained tied to the economy of the British empire as a supplier of raw materials — precious minerals and foodstuffs. British finance capital, allied to a pro-British settler bourgeoisie, dominated the mining industry — a primarily extractive industry, whose lucrative profits were repatriated to Europe — at the expense of local capital. It was this conflict that underlay the Anglo-Boer War and was the basis of subsequent Boer-Brit conflict during the first four decades of the Union.

After winning this first round in the conflict between local and imperial capital, the British state relinquished direct political control over South Africa by creating a Union of the four colonies. This created new options for local white capital in its efforts to promote industrialisation and to free South Africa from its satellite status.

The statutory exclusion of the black majority from the body politic formed the basis of Union. The blacks were stigmatised as a rightless, colonised people and a sharp line of demarcation was drawn through the South African population, separating white from black. Whites, irrespective of their economic or social status, were legally-defined as part of an exclusive community, possessed of certain prerogatives at the expense of the blacks. There was a legally defined ceiling beyond which no black could rise, irrespective of his personal achievements. Exclusivity was given palpable form through the 1913 Natives' Land Act, institutionalising the historic fact of conquest by effective seizure of the wealthiest and most productive sectors of the land as the preserve of the white minority.

South Africa, like Austro-Hungary and Tsarist Russia, then, consists of a multiplicity of ethnic, linguistic and cultural traditions. The principal difference was that the territory of the colonised was not geographically separated from that of the colonisers. Rather, it was a legal and political system that institutionally subordinated blacks to whites that defined the separation between the two groups. These are the facts that constitute the core of colonialism of a special type. Thus in South Africa the national question and the colonial question are co-terminous, expressing the contradiction between the black colonised and the white colonial state.

Through policy the racist state has established the differential treatment of the various ethnic and racial communities that make up the South African population as empirical facts, which everyone has to take into account in their daily lives. Through its ideology of 'white supremacy' and apartheid it has sought to legitimate these as primordial realities with which policy is

designed to cope. Yet there are powerful countervailing forces generated by economic development and its concomitant, social intercourse, that consistently undermine this ideology. In addressing the national and colonial questions, the two components of the national liberation alliance have had to grapple with the segregationist intent of state policy and ideology and the integrative impact of economic and social life.

Two, initially divergent, political traditions emerged in our country to challenge the institutions of racist domination. The first was an African nationalist tradition, rooted in the ideas of European enlightenment and Christian ethical teachings, espoused by the African intelligentsia. The second was revolutionary socialism, located in the left wing of the predominantly white labour movement in the first two decades of the 20th century. Before 1915 no socialist current in South Africa had ever addressed the national question as it affected the country. The crisis of Social-Democracy, precipitated by the war of 1914, brought into being the revolutionary International Socialist League (ISL), which was central to the formation of the Communist Party in 1921.

In the second half of this paper we shall be examining the growing affinity between these two currents, resulting in the creation of the present-day liberation alliance.

It was internationalism that distinguished the left from the right in the early South African labour movement. The founders of the ISL quickly sought links with the Zimmerwald Conference, and in 1917 were among the first to hail the October revolution. Its offspring, the CPSA, was the first political party in our country to devise strategies that sought to unite the racially and culturally diverse working class by an appeal to actual or incipient class loyalties. The very fact of attempting to organise the black workers compelled the communists to confront the national question, with all its complexities, in the climate of white settler colonialism. This became the second and decisive distinction between revolutionary socialism and the various shades of reformism.

The elaboration of a revolutionary approach to the national question commenced with the efforts of the ISL to mobilise African workers. From its earliest phases we can discern two currents, co-existing in the embryonic Communist Party. The dominant one was reflected in the oft-repeated statement of principle proclaiming the need for black-white labour unity. While the principle itself was unexceptional, it was not a feasible basis for the creation of meaningful unity. The second current was intermittently voiced by the more far-sighted spokesmen of the ISL, primarily David Ivon Jones, who warned that the rectitude of the ISL's principle was no substitute for a programme of action. Writing on the issue of the low grade mines in 1919, Jones stressed:

'Let the fact be conceded that under the capitalist system the standard of life of the white workers and the rights of the native workers are incompatible'.[20]

This antagonism was most forcefully brought home during the 1922 'Rand Revolt', when practically the entire white labour movement on the Witwatersrand rose in revolt to defend the industrial colour bar.

The African nationalists, from the beginning, had to address the erosion of the rights of the African people under British colonial rule and then under the white racist state after 1910. They sought to unify the African people around a common programme of struggle. In the words of Pixley kaIsaka Seme:

'We are one people. These divisions, these jealousies are the cause of all our woes and all our backwardness and ignorance today'.

The members of the African élite, who were the exponents of these ideas, conceived of the Africans as potentially one national unit regardless of ethnic or linguistic affiliation. This image was as much a result of their nationalist ideology as of their actual experience. At that time the élite was probably the only stratum of Africans who had passed through the same educational institutions — first the mission schools, then the colleges; in their adult lives they tended to become members of the same professional bodies. In all these ethnic and linguistic considerations were relegated to a secondary place. The milieu they existed in stimulated powerful centripetal forces around a common identity.

Prior to the mid-1920s the African élite who led the ANC conceived of the struggle as the incremental improvement of the political status of all blacks until formal legal equality between black and white was attained. As the first step in this direction they sought the restoration of the pre-Union Cape franchise and its extension to all other provinces.

This was the perspective projected in the 'African Bill of Rights', adopted by the ANC in 1923. The strategy to achieve these objectives was to be entirely constitutional, to persuade a sufficient number of voters of the justice of the claims of the majority. In the last instance the agent for effecting change was conceived as the white state itself.

Despite these rather modest political ambitions the ANC, during the first two decades of its existence, posed an alternative vision of how the society should be structured. Its objectives were a common society, embracing white and black, a meritocracy in which all citizens would have equal opportunity to improve their position by individual effort, and equality before the law. What it lacked was a conception of the African people as their own liberators. It only began to think in these terms after 1927, during the all too brief presidency of Josiah T Gumede.

The Communist Party, like the ISL before it, tended to regard the national movements headed by the black élite as pressure groups aimed at securing the sectional interests of the black middle strata. In spite of such reservations, there were instances of close co-operation with ANC leaders. More fundamental was the perspective of David Ivon Jones, pronounced at the 3rd congress of the Comintern, that 'the revolution in South Africa will be led by the white workers'.[21] It was this conception that the black republic thesis of the 6th Congress of the Comintern overturned, making possible the first steps towards a convergance of socialism and African nationalism.

The 6th Congress of the Comintern is arguably the most controversial chapter in the history of South African socialism. Yet it was the most significant attempt to theorise a strategy for a revolutionary transformation of South Africa. It must therefore serve as our starting point in unravelling the relevance of the debates discussed in Part I to South Africa.

In its thesis on the 'Negro Question', the 6th Congress announced the slogan;

'An independent native South African republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic, with equal rights for all races, black, coloured and white'.[22]

This slogan was elaborated upon in a lengthy thesis formulated by the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) in 1930. The 1930 thesis characterised South Africa as 'a British dominion of the old colonial type' which is politically and economically dominated by a white settler bourgeoisie. It defined the central feature of the South African regime as the dispossession of the indigenous people of their land. The two dominant political and economic trends, it said, were the merging of white settler capital with British finance and industrial capital, which would lead to growing unity between Boer and Brit; and the development of secondary industry, iron and steel production and the commercialisation of agriculture, all leading to the increased proletarianisation of the blacks.

These were of immediate relevance to the main tasks of the CP, the ECCI held, which centred on three interrelated areas:

i. the national character of the Communist Party;
ii. the Communist Party's relationship with the national liberation movement;

iii. trade union and agitational work.

The thesis contended that the institutions of national oppression rested on the expropriation of the African people from the land. To have any meaning, national liberation must necessarily entail the restoration of the land and the wealth of the country to the indigenous people. The principal agency of such a national revolution, it said, would be the African peasantry in alliance with, and under the leadership of, the working class.

The second aspect of the thesis was the strategic tasks it posed for the CP — the development of a close alliance with the ANC. Such an alliance, the thesis anticipated, would involve the quantitative and qualitative growth of the ANC. In order to be effective the ANC must mobilise the peasants and the working class. The influx of an organised peasant and worker presence would have a radicalising effect on the ANC, giving it a more profound social vision. As the peasants and workers gained self-confidence their independent political action would undermine the petty bourgeoisie's ideological domination of the national movement.

To work effectively, the CP would have to constitute itself as the core group of a bloc within the ANC, but maintain its independence as the class party of the proletariat. Its programme for an independent black republic would help transform the national movement into a revolutionary movement against British imperialism and the white settler capitalist class. To be fruitful this strategy would have to be based on the recognition that:

'the basic question in the agrarian situation in South Africa is the land hunger of the blacks and that their interest is of prior importance in the solution of the national question'.[23]

In its agitational and trade union work too, the ECCI said, the CP would have to assume a more national character, stressing issues affecting the black working class and peasants, speaking to them in their indigenous languages. While it emphasised the need for black and white trade union unity, it warned against pandering to the racial chauvinism of the white workers.

The 'Native Republic' thesis was a radical departure from all previous political statements on the South African landscape. It was the first and clearest declaration of the demand for majority rule and infused a truly revolutionary content into the politics of the CP by laying bare the symbiotic relationship between racial domination and capitalist exploitation. In these terms, the class dimension and the national dimension of the struggle were perceived as integrally related.

The 'Native Republic' itself would be the apex of a revolutionary struggle waged by the African peasantry, through peasant organisations, the ANC and in alliance with the CP as the party of the proletariat. The very first item on its agenda would be the resolution of the land question and the establishment of universal adult suffrage. As Moses Kotane later explained:

'The independent Native Republic, which in essence means a bourgeois republic ... must necessarily presuppose a democratic workers' and peasants' republic ...'[24]

Prior to the 6th Congress of the Comintern, neither African nationalists nor socialists had projected the African people as the agent of revolutionary transformation. The real extent of the black republic's radicalism may be gauged by the fright the ANC old guard took at the notion.

It was to prevent Gumede from taking the national movement further along this road that the conservatives in the ANC engineered his ousting in 1930.

The ECCI's thesis in 1930 had not differentiated among the Africans in terms of ethnic or linguistic affiliation. This was broadly in conformity with the language of the liberatory forces of the country. A letter addressed to the CPSA in January 1932, however, spoke in different accents. In the section of the letter dealing with the agrarian question we read:

'For the right of the Zulu, Basuto, etc nations to form their own independent republics. For the voluntary uniting of the African nations in a Federation of Independent Native Republics. The establishment of a workers' and peasants' government. Full guarantee of the rights of all national minorities, for the coloured, Indian and white toiling masses'.[25]

These new formulations seemed to propose a new perspective of a number of 'independent native republics' based on 'Zulu, Basuto, etc' identities. The 1932 letter did not explain itself in this regard, nor did it offer any theoretical grounds for its reformulation of the earlier thesis. It would appear, however, that these terms were not taken up seriously either within the CP or amongst its allies. A CP pamphlet, published in 1934, titled *What is the Native Republic?*, while making reference to the 1932 letter, does not follow it with regard to ethnic/linguistic differentiation. It states:

'... the Native Independent Republic for which the Communists call upon the toilers to struggle, first and foremost means the anti-imperialist revolution, i.e. the driving out of the imperialists and the national liberation of the country'.

The pamphlet continues:

'But the revolution against the imperialists, the anti-imperialist revolution ... will not be a socialist but a bourgeois-democratic revolution, as it is usually called. Not the immediate building of socialism but the liberation of the country from the imperialist yoke — this is the essence and the task of the anti-imperialist revolution'.[26]

When read together, these three documents convey both the national character as well as the social content of the black republic. As essentially a national democratic revolution, the black republic would not necessarily address issues of class conflict — real or latent — among the oppressed people. It would, however, entail the seizure of economic assets, such as the land and its wealth, from incumbent ruling classes. Moreover, this was to be a revolution effected by the peasants in alliance with the working class. The thesis therefore does not envisage a conventional 'bourgeois democratic' revolution, but something more far-reaching. Secondly, while all three documents anticipate the preponderance of the African majority in both the liberation struggle and the institutions of the new state, none of them project an Africanist perspective. The national minorities are seen as having a place in the 'native republic'.

In sharp contrast to the theoretical debates about the shape and character of the democratic institutions of the future that took place in the CP, within the ANC there was a disturbing silence. After getting rid of Gumede, the conservative old guard sought to steer the movement in what they perceived as more constructive directions. The upshot was a decline in effectiveness and schismatic movements as one regional leader after another sought to leave his imprint on the movement. In the final analysis, it was Natal alone that actually seceded to form the Natal Native Congress, under the leadership of Dube. The significance of the breakaway was never seriously analysed, with most commentators treating it as a case of overweening ambition and personal rivalries.

For most African nationalists the desirability of unity across ethnic and linguistic barriers was axiomatic. This reflected itself in the movements that came into being during the 1930s, especially the All-African Convention, founded in 1935 to fight the Hertzog Bills. During the war years African leaders began to speak increasingly of African unity as a natural progression from the previous historical phase of ethnic division. This became most pronounced in the utterances of a new rising generation of militant young leaders, the founders of the ANC Youth League. In the tradition of Seme, the leadership of the Youth League described ethnic particularism as both divisive and retrograde. Thus AM Lembede, writing in 1946, said:

'Africans are one. Out of the heterogenous tribes, there must emerge a homogenous nation. The basis of national unity is the nationalistic feeling of the Africans, the feeling of being African irrespective of tribal connection, social status,

educational attainment or economic class'.[27]

And again in the *Basic Policy of Congress Youth League*, published in 1948:

'African nationalism is the dynamic national liberatory creed of the oppressed African people. Its fundamental aim is the creation of a united nation out of the heterogenous tribes'.[28]

This tradition remained constant amongst all post-war nationalists, including the right wing 'Africanists', who later constituted the PAC.

Within the CP discussion of the black republic perspective, to all intents and purposes, died out after 1935. The next serious exchange on the issue of democratic institutions occured during the war years. It was occasioned by a review of Pat Sloan's book, *Soviet Light on Colonies*, a study of the Soviet CP's application of the policy of national self-determination. The initial review was followed by a comment from Moses Kotane, the General Secretary of the CP, in which he projects a future in which there would be

'... predominantly African areas where, with the addition of more land, African republics may be set up. Industries could be established in these areas, agriculture put on an economic footing, towns, schools and training institutions built'.[29]

Writing in a similar vein, Harry Snitcher penned a draft constitution for a People's Republic. In its second clause, under (b), it calls for:

'An Assembly consisting of direct representatives of the differention National Groups in South Africa on an equal basis'.[30]

The impact of the Soviet experience was evident throughout this debate, but what is equally striking is the apparent forgetfulness of earlier CP formulations. The dangers inherent in this mechanical transfer of that experience came to the fore when one reader of *Freedom*, who signed himself 'Fabian', drew analogies between the racist segregation policies advocated by the white political parties and the Soviet policy of self-determination. After 1946 references to autonomous African republics disappear from the literature.

THE FIGHTING FIFTIES

The 1946 African miners' strike heralded a decade of militant national and class battles consequent on the rapid urbanisation of the African people during the war years and the collapse of the economies of the reserves. The coincidence of these developments with the emergence of a militant new ANC leadership opened up the possibility of revival of the ANC as a movement based primarily on the urban African working class. It was ironic that it was in this context that the notion of autonomous African republics was again revived, this time from the pen of Lionel Forman, editor of the progressive weekly, *Advance*.

Lionel Forman set out his views in a number of articles and essays written between 1954 and his death in 1959. Impressed by the results of the nationalities policies of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, he sought to apply them to South African conditions. During a symposium held in Cape Town in 1954, Forman argued as follows:

'I think the majority of communities which have common language and psychology in South Africa are not full nations, but national groups. That is, I think they are aspirant nations...'[31]

The thrust of Forman's argument received unintentional moral support from the work of Dr I. Pothekin of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, in an article on the 'Formation of Nations in Africa', published in *Liberation*, a journal closely associated with the congress movement. Pothekin, referring to the Zulu during the time of iMfecane, characterised them as a 'nationality' striving towards nationhood. He speculated that this process, aborted by colonial conquest, might attain completion in a post-liberation South Africa.

There were very few takers for the challenging views Forman was expounding. A number of persons who disagreed with him were inhibited by a conception of 'nation' and 'nationality' they shared with him. This was based on Stalin's highly stipulative definition of a 'nation'. The most telling critique was written by HJ Simons. Simons, in his contribution, referred to the two traditions associated with the 'cultural autonomists' and 'self-determinationists' in Eastern Europe.

Simons contended:

'Nationalism in the colonies bears the imprint of these characteristics. It attaches less importance to the recognition of language and culture than to the achievement of equal democratic rights; it works for the elimination of the gap in education, technical skill and living standards between the people of the colony and the inhabitants of more advanced countries; and it demands not a separate territory for the national group, but self-government and the right to secede from the empire'.[32]

He continued to make a distinction between such colonial movements and the movement in South Africa:

'The special features of South Africa's nationalism arise from the combination of an imperialism and its dependent colony in a single political and geographical region'.[33]

Hence

'... the oppressed nationalities does not raise the demands characteristic of national movements in European history or in the colonies. They do not demand "cultural autonomy" or "self-determination" or "secession". In fact these concepts are regarded with doubt and even hostility, because they resemble outwardly the "ideology" of the racialists who use them to mask and justify race oppression'.[33]

African nationalists remained aloof from this debate throughout the 1950s, emphasising the themes of unity and resistance to the state's attempts to revive ethnic hostilities through the Bantu Authorities scheme.

The debate initiated by Forman remained undecided and no one took up the issues he had raised after his untimely demise. When the SACP unveiled its programme, *South Africa's Road to Freedom* in 1962, there was no hint of the controversies of the 1950s. The notion contained in Simons's repudiation of Forman, slightly recast, surfaces again in the formulation 'colonialism of a special type'. The programme states:

'South Africa is not a colony but an independent state. Yet masses of our people enjoy neither independence nor freedom. The conceding of independence to South Africa by Britain in 1910 was not a victory over the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It was designed in the interests of imperialism. Power was transferred not into the hands of the masses of the people of South Africa, but into the hands of the white minority alone. The evils of colonialism, in so far as the non-white majority was concerned, were perpetuated and reinforced. A new type of colonialism was developed, in which the oppressing white nation occupied the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lived side by side with them'.[34]

All the references to the future democratic order envisage a unitary state in which racist practices are illegalised.

TOWARDS A NEW SYNTHESIS

The debates we have recounted here seem to return to the themes of the arguments marshalled in Europe by the protagonists of the 'self-determination' or 'cultural autonomy' schools. It is my contention that though these polemics are illuminating as examples of the application of the universal principles derived from theory, their relevance to South Africa is very marginal. The weakness of all the participants, especially since the Second World War, was not that they sought answers in the Marxist classics or the examples of other countries, but that they chose

the least appropriate. Lenin appeals for concreteness in tackling the national question. The protagonists in these debates tend to be abstract and formulaic at the expense of the living history being made by the masses.

It is my argument that had it not been for industrialisation, 'South Africa' would merely be a geographic description. The disparate ethnic, linguistic and racial constituents that comprise our country have been and are being moulded into a single whole by the numerous economic and social forces arising from the process set in train by the opening of the mines. Successive white regimes have sought to avert the consequences of this process. In South Africa, as in India, the unanticipated results of colonialism very likely will lead in the directions the colonialists themselves fear.

The economic unification of the country has called into being an ever-growing urban proletariat which daily gives expression to its capacity to destroy the edifice of racism. The political unification of the country has generated a national awareness, rooted not in ethnos or language but in identification with a common territory.

Colonialism, despite its innumerable attempts to foster separate identities, has itself fostered a wide range of areas of commonality among South Africans. The most far-reaching of these is economic activity which is a powerful countervailing force to division. In its attempts to stifle the growth of national consciousness the regime sought to deflect it into channels of ethnic nationalism. Today, faced with the evident failure of that option, various sectors and fractions of the ruling class seek to evade the consequences of the empowerment of the majority with such devices as 'group rights', 'ethnic pluralism', 'consociationalism' and 'federalism'. The concrete historical conjuncture indicates that only a new conception of nationhood, which takes no account of ethnicity, skin colour or linguistic affiliation, is consonant with the realisation of the aspirations of the oppressed.

In contrast to the Soviet Union, where the recognition of the rights of minorities and protection of those rights was the condition for empowerment and self-determination, in South Africa such recognition would serve to subvert the rights of the majority and preserve the power of the oppressor minority. In the case of South Africa, national liberation will be achieved through the creation of democratic institutions in the context of a unitary state that accords rights to all citizens as individuals. The perspective of the national liberation alliance is therefore an inclusive nationalism that seeks to weave the diverse strands of the South African population into a new nation defined by a common loyalty to a common motherland.

It clearly emerges from this historical account that the principles that underlie the national liberation movement's approach to the national and colonial question in our country did not spring fully armed from the head of some genius. They are the outcome of years of debate, during which the tide went back and forth. It was through these often acrimonious theoretical struggles and discourse that we arrived at a policy we all regard as correct. This contains a valuable lesson — that revolutionary political theory and practice is the product of a tradition of contestation and the continual testing of theory in revolutionary practice. No individual theoretician or political leader has a monopoly on wisdom. The movement's policies are the product of collective intellectual effort.

Secondly, we have to address the often expressed complaint from various quarters that the theoretical work from within our movement tends to be dismissive and impatient with many of the prescriptions and formulae that are being churned out by political scientists and constitutional lawyers associated with liberal opinion inside South Africa.

What needs to be pointed out is that, though many of these recent writers imagine that their ideas are new and original, our survey indicates that they are nothing of the kind. All the recent proposals — federalism, confederalism, consociationalism

— in one form or another have been part of the discourse of the national liberation movement. While these various schemes may not have been called by their current names, the essential content was similar. Our movement has debated and weighed them all up as possible options, and on each occasion has found them wanting. If sometimes our comrades tend to dismiss these ideas it is not necessarily an indication of intolerance. It might well be because to them it is old hat which many might feel we have long by-passed. I am not, by so saying, suggesting that the question of possible constitutional options is therefore a closed book. I would suggest, however, that the onus of demonstrating that there is something of real value in what they propose lies with the advocates of decentralisation and federalism. Our movement's tradition encourages debate and discussion. We stand ready to engage with any of our opponents on these and any other issues affecting the future of our country.

Notes:

1. Quoted by Harvey Goldberg, in *Jean Juares*, (Madison, Wisconsin, 1962).
2. Marx and Engels, Collected Works, Vol.8 (London) 1977, p.163.
3. Marx and Engels, Selected Works (Moscow), 1970, p.647.
4. Marx and Engels, Collected Works, Vol.6 (London) 1976, p.389.
5. Marx and Engels, Collected Works, Vol.6 (London) 1976, p.472.
6. Marx, K. *The First Indian War of Independence*, (Moscow) 1975, p30.
7. Marx, K. *The First Indian War of Independence*, (Moscow) 1975, p.20.
8. Cf. Otto Bauer, 'The National Question and Social Democracy', in Bottomore and Goode (Eds), *Austro-Marxism* (Oxford) 1978, pp102-118.
9. Herod, C *The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought*, 1976 p.86.
10. Luxemburg, Rosa. 'Nationality and Autonomy', quoted in P Nettle, *Rosa Luxemburg*, (London) 1969, p.507.
11. Quoted by Lenin in Lenin, V.I. Collected Works, Vol.23 (Moscow), 1972, p.30.
12. Quoted in *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, (New York) 1984, p.363.
13. Lenin, VI, Collected Works, Vol.31, p.145.
14. Lenin, VI, Collected Works, Vol.20, p.395; also Vol.22, p.143.
15. Lenin, VI, Collected Works, Vol. 31, pp.149-150.
16. Bernstein, E. *Evolutionary Socialism*, (New York), 1965, p.178.
17. Quoted by d'Encausse and Schram (Eds), *Marxism in Asia* (London), p.125.
18. Lenin, VI, Collected Works, Vol.22, p.281.
19. The phrase is Rosa Luxemburg's, employed in her famous 'Junius Pamphlet'.
20. *The International*, 19th September, 1919.
21. Jones, David Ivon, 'Communism in South Africa', in *South African Communists Speak*, (London) 1981.
22. 'The Black Republic', in *South African Communists Speak*, op.cit.
23. Ibid.
24. Quoted by Bunting, Brian in *Moses Kotane: South African Revolutionary* (London), 1975, p.66.
25. 'Letter of the ECCI to the Communist Party of South Africa' in *Umsebenzi*, 8th January 1932.
26. Communist Party of South Africa, *What is the Native Republic?* (Johannesburg) Mimeo, 1934.
27. 'Policy of the Congress Youth League', in *Inkundla ya Bantu*, May 1946.
28. Quoted in Karis, Thomas and Carter, Gwendolen *From Protest to Challenge*, Vol.2 (Stanford), 1973, p.324.
29. Communist Party of South Africa, *Freedom — Vryheid*, November 1940.
30. Communist Party of South Africa, *Freedom — Vryheid*, January 1941.
31. Forum Club/South Africa Club. 'The National Question in South Africa — a Symposium', (Cape Town), 1954. Mimeo.
32. Simons, HJ *The National Question in South Africa*, (Cape Town), mimeo, no date.
33. Ibid.
34. South African Communist Party, *South Africa's Road to Freedom* (London), 1964.

REFLECTIONS ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION
IN SOUTH AFRICA
by Ben Maqubane

...A real socialist movement can only be born of struggle, of uncompromising affirmation of the faith that is in us. Such a movement infallibly gathers to it every element of rebellion and progress, and in the midst of the storm and stress of the struggle solidifies into a real revolutionary force.
— James Connolly

Preliminary Remarks

In the discussion of the national question in South Africa, the most important thing is to think and see clearly — that is dangerously — and to answer clearly the innocent first questions: What fundamentally is the struggle about in South Africa that has lasted this long? To agree on what it is not: neither a civil rights struggle nor a struggle for racial equality nor integration is to admit the obvious! What then is the struggle about?

In 1960, the African National Congress formed in 1912 and PAC created by a faction in the ANC were banned. In 1961 the ANC called the black people and other oppressed groups to take arms against the settler state built on the noxious racist philosophy of white supremacy. The cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe — the spear of the nation — became a vanguard of a people preparing to rise for the recovery of their lost lands and self-determination. The struggle that was being joined is an old one. It had begun more than three hundred years ago when the Khoi and the Nama fought the white settlers bent on expropriating their lands with bows and arrows and spears. The armed resistance to colonialism was later carried on by the Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Tswana and Venda chieftains and kingdoms; until each in turn was defeated and the men and women folk were incorporated as rightless labour into the farms, mines, kitchens and factories of their erstwhile rulers.

The failure of armed resistance to conquest led in 1912 to the creation of the African Native Congress, later called the African National Congress to continue the struggle by political means. The founding of the ANC was therefore a watershed: the men and women who met in Bloemfontein were inspired by a hope of creating among the recently conquered chiefdoms and kingdoms, a new sense of nationhood. With the formation of the ANC, every day that passed, every act of injustice, every demand of the workers that was drowned in blood, every police pick-up van, brought home the dream for emancipation from the brutalities of white minority rule and capitalist exploitation. In the ANC the spirit of resistance was kept alive. For such an organisation the word failure has no meaning. The ANC keeps our hopes intact.

The creation in 1910 of the Union of South Africa as a white domination within the British Empire, confronted the founding fathers of the ANC with difficult problems. Imperial Britain made it clear and in no uncertain terms, that its paramount objective in the newly created Dominion was Anglo-Boer unity built on black servitude. The Act of Union had already provided constitutional machinery for the abolition of what political rights Africans had been given, especially the qualified franchise in the Cape Colony. The Act of Union not only removed the theoretical rights of disenfranchised blacks to be elected to parliament, but also provided for the removal of the franchise from African voters through a two-thirds majority vote of both houses of parliament in a joint session.

To the ANC founding fathers, it became crystal clear that in the new British Dominion, the black man, as Lord Milner, Lord Selbourne and various others had stated, had no value except as the equivalent of so much horse power. As the historian de Kiewiet put it:

> 'What an abundance of rain and grass was to New Zealand mutton, what plenty of cheap grazing land was to Australian wool, what the fertile prairies acres were to Canadian wheat, cheap native labour was to South African mining and industrial enterprise' (1941).

That is, Africans were both indispensable and expendable.

The concerns of the ANC in 1912 went beyond constitutional issues: it addressed itself to the African condition brought about by the tragedy of conquest. Indeed the first post-Union administration responding to the cry for labour from mining conglomerates and capitalist agricultural monopolies passed a number of laws to facilitate the exploitation of black labour. For instance, breaking a contract was made a criminal offence under the Native Labour Regulation Act; the exclusion of Africans from skilled industrial jobs was for the first time given legal sanction in the Mines and Works Act, and in 1911 the Natives' Land Bill was drafted: it prohibited rural land ownership by Africans or occupation outside the 'reserves' (which comprised nearly eight percent of the area of the country), dispossessing many African peasants and outlawing leasing or tenant-farming relationships between blacks and whites. Obviously, the exclusion of Africans from 'white' politics was now working out its logic. That is,

> The Land Act of 1913 and complementary labour legislation were the legal tools employed to destroy a whole class of peasant producers, forcing them into already crowded reserves or driving them into new and arduous social relationships — as farm workers, as mine labourers, and later in the least skilled and most badly paid positions in urban industrial, municipal and domestic employment. The group of men assembled at Bloemfontein in 1912 were well aware of the wider dimensions of the social tragedy being enacted around them (Lodge, 1985:2).

This abbreviated resumé of the foundation of the Union of South Africa as a white dominion within the British Empire was enough to indicate the dimension of the problem faced by the oppressed in South Africa.

This paper consists of four major sections. The first reviews the debate now going on in various quarters about the character of the ANC and its allies regarding whether the struggle in South Africa is class or national, and whether the ANC, given its original and multi-class character has the ability to lead the struggle beyond petty bourgeois democratic demands; second, I review the Marxist theory on the national question under conditions of colonialism; third, I review the origin of the theory of internal colonialism; and finally, I review developments in South Africa in the decade since the Soweto uprising and the response of the national movement under the leadership of the African National Congress.

National or Class Struggle

The emergence and development of the black proletariat, its increasing struggle against white minority rule and capitalist exploitation, and the possibility of uniting the struggle of the working class with that of broad sectors of the oppressed is an objective historical fact today in South Africa and has raised many crucial theoretical and practical questions. That is, what class or combination of classes, will inherit the future? What is the future of capitalism? What is the possibility of establishing socialism? These questions, given the vested interests of

international imperialism, assume special significance.

Much of the debate that occurs today about whether the struggle against white minority rule is a national or class struggle invariably begins with the landmark resolution adopted in 1928 and 1930 by the Communist International on the Black National Question in the USA and South Africa. The thesis had a profound historical influence that is still being felt today.

Recently, several criticisms have been levelled against the ANC and its allies. Briefly, the criticisms involve the nature of the ANC and the implications of its alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP). Among those who have raised the criticism most persistently and sharply are Tabata (1985) and the various documents of the Unity movement, Archie Mafeje (1986, 1987); John Saul (1986/7); *Inqaba* Magazine (1986 — this magazine describes itself as the Marxist tendency in the ANC), A. Callinicos (1985) among others.

Those who are sceptical of the ANC and criticise its alliance with the SACP share a certain ideological orientation. First, the criticisms are made from a Trotskyite perspective; second, these writers are virulently anti-Soviet Union; third, they have a tendency of tendentiously selecting and deliberately misquoting statements and documents of the ANC and the SACP in the hope of discrediting and creating doubts about the one movement that has the potential of wresting power from the white minority regime.

Furthermore, most of these writers are opposed to armed struggle, dismissing it as hopelessly misconceived given the strength of the white minority state and the efficiency of the military. For instance, Tabata (1986:80) writes:

Our methods of achieving our aims cannot be based on militarism. It should be obvious to all that we cannot possibly match our military power with that of the South African state. Anyone who creates false illusions on this score is playing up to *herrenvolkism* or white domination. The racists know that for so long as the blacks hold illusions of deposing them from power through sheer military force, so long will they maintain white domination. This is why their press gives maximum publicity to the ineffectual military stunts of the ANC. The pretence of the racists to be worried by the ANC's military power is designed to fix the attention of blacks on a forlorn hope that in the near future Congress will invade South Africa in the same way that Frelimo fought its way into Mozambique.

More specifically, the criticism can be summed up as follows:
1. The ANC is a petty bourgeois organisation whose main goal is the abolition of apartheid and given its domination by the petty bourgeois, it will betray the working class.
2. The SACP is a bureaucratic-Stalinist organisation whose policies not only follow slavishly the twists and turns of Moscow's policies, but the SACP instead of advancing the interests of the working class, tails the ANC.
3. What is needed in South Africa is an independent Marxist party expressing the interests of the working class and that will fight for socialism unencumbered by nationalist concerns.
4. The Freedom Charter is not a socialist document; besides its demands are too vague to be trusted.

In *Inqaba* (1986:10) we read:

If the SA Communist Party were a genuine Marxist party, it would be organising the militant youth and workers without delay to build a mass ANC on a socialist programme. It would, as we do, explain and develop the transitional and socialist content of the Freedom Charter, emphasising its promise to nationalise the monopolies, and linking it to a clear strategy for workers' power. The SACP would be able, very rapidly, to organise tens of thousands of revolutionary cadres for this purpose — and we would support them in every genuine step.

For Callinicos (1986:11), the theory of internal colonialism, which he says was adopted by the ANC in its document *Strategy and Tactics*, is nothing but a 'piece of bizarre phantasy'. For him:

South Africa is the most highly industrialised country in Africa, whose population, black and white, has been progressively proletarianised and urbanised over the last century. The SACP invite us to view this capitalist social formation as in fact two societies, one white, the other black, each with its distinct structure, related primarily through white colonial domination. Not only is the suggestion intrinsically preposterous: it flies in the face of the past fifteen years' research by South African Marxists, which has shown how the institutions of racial domination were first created and have been since reshaped over the years in order to meet the needs of the different fractions of South African capital *(Ibid)*.

Mafeje, like Callinicos, is also impressed by the integration of blacks into the urban-industrial order of South Africa.

'Culturally,' he writes, 'the difference between a penis-sheath and a pair of trousers might seem dramatic and yet migrant miners have for years moved from one to the other with perfect ease. Likewise, in the age of "Native" or "Bantu" commissions in South Africa witnessed whites engaged in traditional ceremonies with full African regalia befitting their status as "supreme chief of natives".

Consequently, one is puzzled and at the same time embarrassed to acknowledge the fact that the position of the South African Communist Party on the question of "nationalities", though inspired by a liberatory ideology, coincides with that of the government on bantustans. Fortunately, one does not have to strain to establish this point because the Communist Party has more publications on this issue than any other political organisation in South Africa. From its inception the Communist Party has been guided by Stalin's thesis on the right of nations to self-determination and the recommendations of the Third International/Comintern to fraternal organisations. As was observed earlier, both these represented universal texts which had to be translated into the vernacular. The slogan recommended for South Africa in the 1920s was a "Native Republic" which was to fight for the overthrow of British and Afrikaner imperialism and for the restoration of lost territory to the natives. As a further development, in 1932 the Comintern advised that the concept be made more explicit by including *inter alia* the following slogans: Drive out the imperialist. Complete and immediate national independence for the people of South Africa. For the right of the Zulu, Basuto, etc., nations to form their own independent republics. For the voluntary uniting of the African nations in a Federation of Independent Native Republics' (Cf. Botha's 'constellation of independent nations' in South Africa) Mafeje, 1986; 100-101.

In the four points above and the quotes from Tabata, *Inqaba*, Callinicos and Mafeje, the programmes of the Congress Alliance are parodied and caricatured to the point of absurdity. Indeed, there seems to be an almost deliberate disregard of the painstaking work that the SACP and the ANC have put into thinking out the implications of the nature of the white minority states. Callinicos's position is reminiscent of the arguments advanced by the 'Left Opposition' current in the Comintern. Then and now the aim of the 'Left Opposition' was a liquidation of the national liberation struggles with 'left' arguments. For instance, in Callinicos and the *Inqaba* pages, one often reads theoretical arguments against the right of self-determination for Africans, arguments advising against dividing the proletariat with too much emphasis on national aspirations of black workers. That is, the struggle must be confined to the 'limits' acceptable to

white workers, who will one day learn that their 'true' class interests do not lie with the white bourgeouisie, but with the black working class. *Inqaba* (1986:37) writes:

> The inability of fascism in South Africa to gain or sustain a momentum towards power will bring the class contradiction within it to the surface, probably in a very explosive or volatile way. This could well provide crucial opportunities, if we are alert to it, for the black workers' movement to win over working-class and lower middle-class whites from fascism directly to the proletarian revolution.

Inside South Africa itself two tendencies have emerged to contest the loyalty of the black workers — the co-called 'workerist' and 'charterist' tendencies. The former emphasises the independent role of trade unions and is suspicious of all struggles that do not involve 'pure' working class ones. 'What is more,' writes *Isizwe* (1987:51), 'workerism tends to have a very narrow idea of working class concerns ... workerism ... tends to be highly suspicious of any kind of popular alliance, and of any struggle that involves more than just working class issues.'

The designation 'charterist' describes those organisations like the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Student Organisation (SASO) which argue that unions, like other mass community organisations, should not divorce themselves from the broad alliances that fight the general oppression and exploitation of the black people as members of the oppressed nationalities. Underlying this debate has been the question of whether socialism is on the agenda in South Africa or whether the struggle is simply to achieve first, democracy, and later, socialism.[2]

Before I look at the ANC/CPSA thesis on the national question, it is necessary to review the more obvious facts about the Marxist approaches to the class and national questions in the era of imperialism.

Marxism and the National Question.

The founders of Marxism, Marx and Engels, in their discussion of the national question understood that the proletarian struggle for social emancipation never takes place in a vacuum. Many other social issues influence and impact on it. But they always proceeded from the interests of the working class. In doing so, they analysed national oppression to see how it impacts on the class struggle. By taking factors like colonial conquest, racism and the women's question, Marxism was able to create and develop a comprehensive materialist theory of national liberation. Basing himself on the works of Marx and Engels, Lenin elaborated further on the Marxist theory of national liberation.

The question that was uppermost in the thinking of the founders of historical materialism involved the task of how workers' parties became indispensable organs for transforming the unco-ordinated struggle of national movements into allies of workers' struggle as a whole. The workers' party could not confine itself exclusively to workers' interests alone. It was the duty of the working class to lead all the democratic elements; to ensure that those elements, above all the peasants, gave their support. For this reason the party had to rely not only on the mass working class movement; it also had to disseminate its ideas among other classes, and strata of the population. That is, it had a duty to work with and among national formations to spread working-class ideas. Such a party had to build on the sound foundation of Marxist theory; all the time adhering to the unity of theory and practice in its practice.

Marx and Engels, in a true spirit of internationalism, devoted considerable time to analysing the development of bourgeois national movements in Western Europe, where such movements were then focused. They supported these movements in so far as they represented struggles against feudal absolutism and were against reactionary classes holding back the development of capitalism, which at that time was historically progressive.

For example, Marx and Engels first put forth their general ideas on the national question in 1848 in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Here they demonstrated that the concepts 'nation' and 'national' are products of the era of the rise of capitalism and are closely connected with the division of society into two basic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The class struggle is a consequence of this division. The abolition of national oppression depends on the outcome of this struggle, inasmuch as national oppression is a manifestation of the class domination of the bourgeoisie. Having appeared together with the rise and consolidation of bourgeois relations of production, national oppression disappears as these relations are abolished. That is, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie paves the way for a drawing together of nations.

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end (1969:125).

After reviewing the growth of the European national liberation movement and the deepening of class contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the working class in the middle of the 19th century, Marx further developed the general ideas set forth in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

Studying the problem of the national liberation movement in Ireland in the light of the struggle of the British working class against their own bourgeoisie, Marx arrived at the conclusion that the international alliance of the working class and consequently their own social emancipation were impossible without first demolishing the wall of enmity and isolation between nations, which had been continuously created by the bourgeoisie. 'Any nation that oppresses another forgets its own chains,' Marx wrote on March 18, 1870 (*Ibid*: 176). In a letter to S Meyer and A Vogt of April 9, 1870, he noted that the working class of Britain was 'divided into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians' (1955:286) and underlined that it was particularly important 'to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that *for them* the national *emancipation of Ireland* is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but *the first condition of their own social emancipation*' (*Ibid*:287). In other words, it was a question of the right of nations to self-determination.

In contrast to the bourgeois formulation of the question, Marx regarded national self-determination first as a slogan of the working class and, second, as one of the most important conditions ensuring the international class alliance of the workers essential for the victory over their class enemy — the bourgeoisie. This Marxist premise enabled Engels in a letter to K Kautsky, written 12 years later on September 12, 1882, to say in reference to the future, that 'the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing' (*Ibid*:423).

Marx and Engels offered only the general theoretical principles in formulating the problems posed by national oppression. It remained for Lenin, who lived in the era of imperialism to draw up a scientific theory for solving the national-colonial question. Lenin demonstrated that as capitalism moves into the imperial phase, the national question is exacerbated and develops into a most acute international socio-political issue.

Therefore, the task for the national liberation movement, if it was to achieve genuine independence, would involve the application of the historical materialist method within a colonial context, rather than simply arguing mechanically, the 'economic case' for socialism, which Marxists in the metropolitan countries could do. This entailed an adaptation of Marxist science to the national conditions created by the colonial situation. In a colonial situation, the cause of freedom for subjected peoples

could not be genuine unless the interests of the most subject classes were taken into consideration. For Marxists in the colonial countries the cause of freedom for their people was coeval with that of labour.

> 'We must *link* the revolutionary struggle for socialism with a revolutionary programme on the national question ... We must *combine* the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics on all democratic demands ...' (V.1. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.21,p.408).

Today history is full of examples in which the Marxist theory as a revolutionary tool was adapted and used as an anti-imperialist weapon. Indeed, the 'proletarian' nature of the anti-colonial struggles has been recognised successively by such Marxists as James Connolly in Ireland, Mao in China, Fidel Castro in Cuba, Ho Chi Min in Vietnam, Amilcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau, etc.' Connolly in what today looks like an over-sanguine assumption, argued that Irish Catholics had learned over the centuries that

> Just as the socialist knows that the working class, being the lowest in the social system, cannot emancipate itself without as a result emancipating all other classes, so the Irish Catholic has realised that he, being the most oppressed and disenfranchised, could not win any modicum of political freedom or social recognition for himself without winning it for all others in Ireland ... He has learned that his struggle is, and has been, the struggle of all the lowly and dispossessed, and he has grown broadminded with the broadmindedness of the slave in revolt against slavery (Quoted in Ramson, 1980:24).

Bernard Ramson (1980:6-7) in his book, *Connolly's Marxism*, writes that

> As it emerged as the faith of the organised working class in the late nineteenth century industrial Europe and North America, 'Marxism' centred itself on the problem of replacing the established bourgeois political economy with its socialist antithesis. In the dependent territories of the capitalist empires, then as in the twentieth century, Marxist strategy could not be resolved into such matters of empirical judgement and calculation. The burden of history is a prime legacy of long standing imperial relationships, both in terms of the self-definition of the ruled and the perceptions of the rulers. Marxists, like Connolly, from dependent nations were primarily obliged to articulate their doctrine as a standpoint within the history of the national struggle.

In examining the stragetic questions faced by the working class in the countries dominated by imperialism it must be remembered that the class alignments that fight for national liberation and social emancipation are not the same as those spawned by the logic of capitalism. This makes it very difficult — even in our day — for a national liberation revolution to begin as a socialist revolution.

The Origin of the ANC and SACP: A Synopsis
The relationship between the ANC and the SACP goes way back to the late 1920s and covers a long and variegated path. This means that the study of the alliance must be approached concretely and historically. That is, the tasks the ANC and SACP set themselves when they were created in 1912 and 1921 respectively, must be considered from the standpoint of the historical conditions, place and time in which these organisations were formed. It is especially important to take into consideration the overall historical situation created by imperialism, the level of self-awareness and organisation of the ANC at the time it was formed and the involvement of black workers into the political economy of the white settler state. Such an approach makes it possible to comprehend more deeply the purpose and the goals of the two organisations and to arrive at a fuller interpretation of the ideas that informed these organisations.

In 1912, as I have stated above, the ANC represented the interests and aspirations of a people who had been recently conquered, whom the Union constitution excluded from the political process. As Oliver Tambo, the President of the ANC put it:

> The South African constitution excludes the blacks. They are outside the constitution. There is nothing they can do about the decisions, the policies of the South African regime. They don't belong. They are fighting from outside this white state. This is not a civil rights struggle at all. If we were part of the constitution, if we were citizens like any other, then of course there would be rights to fight for, as there are rights to fight for in the United States. But in South Africa the position is different. Our struggle is basically, essentially, fundamentally, a national liberation struggle' (Quoted by *Nyawuza*, 1984:26).

In the last analysis, the national question in South Africa is the product of the fact of conquest and the treatment of Africans as a subjugated people. In the struggle for emancipation, the ANC considers the land question as crucial. It is not merely a simple economic question, but a national question, since the landlords constitute a mortally hated oppressor. In Ireland, Marx underlined the relationship between the land, the national question and the class struggle.

> In Ireland *the land question* has hitherto been the *exclusive form* of the social question, because it is a question of existence, of *life and death*, for the immense majority of the Irish people, and because it is at the same time inseparable from the *national* question. (1971:281)

Furthermore, to paraphrase Baur, the state which enslaves the Africans is a settler state accommodating the interest of Britons and Boers; the court which protects the interests of the property owners and throws the dispossessed in jail is a white settler state; each death sentence against Africans is written in English and Afrikaans, and both languages are used to issue the orders to the armies that are dispatched to crush every form of resistance by the defenceless workers. Baur concluded in the case of German and Czech workers that the 'nationalist hatred is a transformed class hatred' (Quoted by Munck, 1986:40). In South Africa, capitalism did not produce a national class proletariat, but on the contrary, a nationally class-conscious proletariat *(Ibid)*.

Those who are critical of the national orientation of the ANC, completely ignore this fact. The character of white minority rule is apprehended in a one-sided manner and is oversimplified. Until the historical injustice of conquest and dispossession that Africans experienced with the advent of white minority rule is redressed, the task of national emancipation will not lose its democratic content and its bearers will always act as objective allies of the working class.

Because of the nature of white minority rule and capitalist exploitation in South Africa, black people as a people continue to be degraded and victimised across class lines. Indeed the subjugation of whole nations and peoples is a basic and fundamental essence of the imperialist system. Black people's labour has played a crucial role at each stage of the development and expansion of capitalism in South Africa. The early history of labour in South Africa is a record of slavery, bondage, child-stealing and kidnapping. In later years these compulsions to work were replaced by refinements of legal devices to direct black labour into the service of the whites (cf. Alex Hepple, 1966:177).

De Kiewiet (1941:180) points out in his previously cited book that the wars between white settlers and Africans in South Africa, differed from similar wars with Indians in North America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, in that the former were not only concerned with land but also with black labour,

not only with the appropriation of the means of production but also with the integration of the conquered as exploited workers into new systems of production:

> Actually the native wars were a process which gave the white community more than possession of the bulk of the best land. It gave them a considerable measure of control over the services of the natives. The land wars were also labour wars. In other words, the natives lost free access to the land, but were permitted to draw sustenance from it as labourers, herdsmen or renters.

The typical form of the economic relationship which emerged between the new private owners of the means of production and the economically dependent masses was that: 'In return for residence, the right to cultivate a piece of land and graze a few animals, the landowner usually received the services of the tenant in the field and of his women in the household' (19). The specific form of labour, remuneration and surplus appropriation varied considerably, as one inquiry observed:

> As vacant or subjugated land was taken up by the European immigrants, dispossessed or fugitive natives or remnants of scattered tribes remained or penetrated for protection into the areas of European occupation, and were allowed to settle upon their farms, generally on a tenure of service. These natives are usually called 'squatters'. There is no statutory definition of this word, which is or has been made use of in many different connotations. Whether a native lives on an occupied or unoccupied farm, whether he pays rent or gives his own service or that of his family, whether or not wages are paid, whether the service is casual labour at call or seasonal or for specified periods, whether he cultivates for a share of produce — in all these cases he is called a squatter. The term therefore covers undefined leasehold, metayage, labour tenancy, part-time service and, in fine, every condition of settlement except fixed leasehold and full-time wage service (Quoted by Johnstone, 1976:21).

The system of class exploitation institutionalised by settler capitalist property owners, thus assumed a specific form of structure of national domination and racial discrimination. This system involved an elaborate system of discriminatory laws creating a social situation in which, between coloniser and colonised, there is room only for forced labour, intimidation, police brutality, cruelty, sadism, arrogance, and in a parody of education, the hasty manufacturers of a few thousand subordinate functionaries, 'boy' artisans, office clerks and interpreters necessary for the smooth operation of the economy. (Cf. Cesaire, 1972:21). In South Africa the settlers resuscitate disembodied traditional institutions à la bantustans, weaves a villainous complicity with treacherous elements of the traditional ruling classes who agree to serve, and renders this tyranny more effective to prolong artificially the survival of the local past in the most pernicious aspects. He 'has grafted modern abuse on to ancient injustice, hateful racism on to old inequality' (Cesaire, 1972:24).

The dialectic between class and national aspiration of African people is captured in the words of ANC leaders to a meeting of about 1 000 black workers in Johannesburg:

> God gave you Africa to live in. He gave you anything he knew was necessary for you. He gave you a land and gold, which you gave away to other people. After you gave them the country, they treated you worse than dogs. Today you are carrying passes. Today you have got no place. Today they are telling you that you will get a place in heaven. There is one thing sure, my friends, it is this, if you have no place on earth you have no place in heaven (Quoted by Johnstone, 1976:175).

Given the centrality of black labour in the settlers' colonisa-

tion politics, the various struggles black people waged become closely interwoven, often passing into each other in real life. Political struggle also contained economic demands while workers' strikes served as an instrument to advance political demands. One need only recall the history of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) in the 1920s and in our time, COSATU, to understand this interaction.

The SACP was founded in 1921. Lerumo, in the foreword to his book on the history of the CP, points out that 'some of the assumptions made by the pioneer communists of South Africa were incorrect and led them to indefensible positions, particularly when as leaders of the white labour movement they felt themselves obliged to defend on 'Marxist' grounds the maintenance of the colour bar in industry'. (1971) Using the high vantage-point of retrospect, Trotskyites and 'nationalists' who are hostile to the ANC/SACP alliance never tire of reminding us of the SACP's support of the 1922 reactionary strike of white miners and the support the CP gave to the pact that united the National Party and Labour Party on an explicitly racist programme. If these criticisms were offered in a fraternal spirit one would not quarrel with them. But in the case of the Trotskyites and enemies of the African struggle headed by the ANC these criticisms are used maliciously. The unhistorical approach is not only unjust to men who fulfilled a notable task; it also fails to see that those men and women, like their Christian and liberal counterparts, were bound by the inevitable limitations of their time, their background and the pressures that mould them. 'It fails to educate because it does not explain in its historical context what those pressures and limitations were and how, with deeper experience and knowledge, the movement they founded developed to transcend, correct and overcome them'. (*Ibid.*)

A general feature of the period under review was that the working class level of development, degree of organisation and scale of struggles by the various factions were uneven. The development of class consciousness of black and white workers was inseparably associated with the whole historical development of their respective communities. That is, the interaction of national and social experiences played an important part. Because of the interweaving of these factors the moulding of the proletariat class consciousness was an uneven process, especially because it occurred in uneven material and political conditions.

The ANC and CPSA Alliance
The nature and character of black oppression and exploitation in South Africa has been a controversial and hotly debated issue. It is not an exaggeration today that the conflicting answers to, and strategies for the solution of, the question of black oppression and exploitation is at the core of the various disputes that have plagued the liberation movement. Does the situation of blacks in South Africa boil down to national oppression or is it an issue of class exploitation only? Or is the issue really one of both national oppression and class exploitation?

The manner in which the problem is posed implies *ipso facto* different tactics and strategies. If, for instance, the problem of blacks in South Africa is posed as one of national oppression only as the Pan African Congress (PAC) has conceptualised it, then the issues of class exploitation are considered secondary or not relevant at all. On the other hand, if the problem is posed only as one of class exploitation à la Trotskyites, then the questions of self-determination and national liberation are clearly rendered irrelevant in the South African context. If national oppression and class exploitation are considered as dialectically related, then national emancipation and social liberation are not mutually execlusive.

After the CP lost its faith in the white workers' revolutionary potential, it began to formulate a new approach to the national question in South Africa. In the process it worked out anew its

attitude to the African National Congress. It came to the conclusion that given the nature of the ANC, and its historic role, it was possible to work with and take advantage of 'bourgeois' nationalism, which expressed itself concretely through the democratic aspiration of all the classes in the ANC.

During the presidency of JJ Gumede, the relationship between the CP and the ANC improved greatly, even though Gumede ten years earlier had been a strong opponent of 'Bolshevism'. As ANC representative he attended the International Congress of the League Against Imperialism at Brussels in Belgium. Other delegates from South Africa were James la Guma, who represented the CP, and Daniel Colraine of the South African Trade Union Congress. President Gumede went on a visit to Moscow in 1927 to attend the tenth anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution.

From 1927 onwards the programme and strategy of the CP has been fundamentally determined by its theoretical conception of the nature of the white minority state, especially its relationship to the African majority. The component parts of the CP's analysis of the national question in South Africa are derived from the thesis adopted by the 1928 Congress of the Comintern which summed up the situation in the Union of South Africa. Those parts of Documents 41 and 42 which are most relevant to explaining the nature of white minority rule and the black oppression state:

Document 41

In the Union of South Africa, the negro masses, which constitute the majority of the population, are being expropriated from the land by the white colonists and by the State, are deprived of political rights and of the right of freedom of movement, are subjected to the most brutal forms of racial and class oppression, and suffer simultaneously from pre-capitalist and capitalist methods of exploitation and oppression. (*South African Communists Speak, 1915-1980*:90).

On the role of British imperialism, **Document 42** stated: South Africa is a British Dominion of the colonial type. The development of relations of capitalist production has led to British imperialism carrying out the economic exploitation of the country with the participation of the white bourgeoisie of South Africa, since British capital continues to occupy the principal economic positions in the country (banks, mining and industry), and since the South African bourgeoisie is equally interested in the merciless exploitation of the negro population.

In the recent period in South Africa we have witnessed the growth of the manufacturing iron and steel industries, the development of commercial crops (cotton, sugar, cane), and the growth of capitalist relations in agriculture, chiefly in cattle-raising. On the basis of this growth of capitalism there is a growing tendency to expropriate the land from the negroes and from a certain section of the white farming population. The South African bourgeoisie is endeavouring also by legislative means to create a cheap market of labour power and a reserve army. (*Ibid*:91).

These excerpts from the Comintern resolution draw attention to the fact that white minority rule has its origin in a particular form of settler colonialism and derives its logic in the capitalist mode of production thoroughly influenced by imperialism.

That is, political oppression, cultural repression, and economic exploitation of the African people benefited the bourgeoisie of a few Western imperialist countries who invested their capital in the diamond and gold mines in South Africa in the last quarter of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries. From then on South Africa was organically integrated into the capitalist world system. The economic and social structure of the country was governed by the laws of this system, and controlled by the classes that dominated the world market, as both history and the support that the white minority enjoys from imperialist circles demonstrate so well.

We need to remind ourselves that the Marxist theory on the national liberation question and the white settler state in South Africa are not formulated as an academic aid to the study and writing of history as practised in the universities. It had, and still has, a definitely operational character as a guide to strategic and tactical questions. Examined from the vantage point of today, the two formulations are a remarkable appraisal of the fundamental structure and character of South Africa, whose aptness and relevance have been vindicated rather than made obsolete, by the passage of time. 'Its emphasis on the "colonial" type of the country, on the "united white front for the exploitation of the native population" between British imperialism and the white South African bourgeoisie, foreshadowed the programme adopted by the South African Communist Party in 1967 with the benefit of thirty-four years' experience and study' (Lerumo, 1971, revised edition, 1980:58-59).

Contrary to the shallow misrepresentation and disingenuous attempts by Callinicos and Mafeje to discredit the theory of internal colonialism at the time it was formulated, the SACP and the ANC had no coherent theory on the character of black oppression, and no comprehensive strategy for intervention and leadership in the struggle for national and social emancipation. The great contribution of the Comintern Thesis on the national question, in 1928 and 1930, was that for the first time the communists and later nationalists confronted the specific nature of the South African state and broke with the liquidationist approach that had denied the fact that the African people in South Africa were subject to a form of oppression distinct from that of white working class exploitation and oppression. Specifically, the theses recognised that black exploitation was a particular oppression and exploitation which required a comprehensive theoretical and historical analysis in its own right, and a special political strategy and programme to overthrow it. Specifically, the thesis highlighted the fact that the struggle against white minority rule, was also a struggle against imperialism and a key to the struggle for social emancipation in South Africa. Finally, the black nation thesis grasped the centrality of black labour in the evolution of South African capitalism as it moved from mining and farming to the development of secondary industry.

Historically, the conquest and disenfranchisement of Africans in 1910 was essentially the political and legal reflection of the settler imperative and its insatiable demand for black labour which it exploits using extraordinary extra economic methods. The inextricable link between the national (race) and the class question affect all blacks in South Africa and objectively determines (as I show below) the inevitable logic and direction of that struggle. Contrary to Callinicos, Mafeje, and the workerists, the collective historical experience of Africans is not an illusion but central to the economic development and socio-political formation of South Africa. As Simons and Simons (1969:387) put it, the thesis as it was adopted 'was a bolder and more imaginative programme than any projected for the overthrow of white supremacy'.

Sanctioned by centuries of colonial war, slavery and forced labour; by brute force and the concentration of power in the oligarchy; by education, propaganda, Christianity and the entire range of approved institutions — white power seemed so formidable and inevitable that the most radical leaders of the liberation movement hesitated to present a direct challenge to it. They fought a defensive battle to preserve old rights or resist new assaults; they pleaded for acceptance as equals within the existing order, and never envisaged its destruction. The ANC's constitution, based on a draft prepared in 1919 by a committee under RW Msimang, stipulated no higher aim than 'to advocate by just means the removal of the "Colour Bar" in political, education and industrial fields and for equitable representation of Natives in Parliament'. It needed courage to demand 'equal rights for all civilised men', as the Congress stipulated in 1923.

Not then, however, nor for many years to come, did it claim universal suffrage and majority rule.

Has the integration of the black working class into the industrial economy and their urbanisation made the theory of internal colonialism a bizarre phantasy as Callinicos claims? Clearly no!

> Historical, political, economic, social and cultural evidence clearly points to the fact that the term 'RSA' does not comprise the total population of South Africa, but only the settler community and their descendants and can only denote the state of the white settler nation. *Vis-à-vis* the subjugated black nation, RSA is, therefore the colonial power. A colonial situation which has the special historico-geographical characteristic that the colonial power and the colonial people both occupy the same territory, still subsists in South Africa. The claim that the term 'RSA' applies equally to both nations is refuted daily by reality. This claim is reminiscent of the ludicrous post-war French and Portuguese claims that their African colonies were "overseas provinces", an independent part of metropolitan territory. If accepted, this claim would also lead to the absurdity that, had the Union been successful in annexing Namibia in 1919 as its 'fifth province', Namibia would have been independent long ago! (Theodoropoulus, 1982:62).

Sam Nolutshungu's argument in his book *Changing South Africa* (1983), that the South African state is incapable of incorporating Africans, is formed by the idea that blacks in South Africa are governed by institutions that are colonial in character. In this regard he mentions the racial franchise and the institutions of labour control — influx control, pass laws, labour bureaus and the bantustans — all these he says represent a colonial form of rule. Africans are accorded a political place in the polity by two principles of colonial rule: racial exclusion from the state and systematic policing and control for purposes of exploitation. Given these structural realities, the reformist overtures of the Botha regime are nothing but ideological deceptions of a regime in crisis.

Further, Nolutshunga argues that unless the distinctive and specific effects of the terms of domination and submission are taken fully into account neither the resistance to change on the part of the ruling whites, nor political alignments and behaviour favouring radical change among blacks can be properly appreciated:

Just as there is a resistance among whites to any real loss of power and privilege, there is, among blacks, an equally strong ideological and political resistance to any reform that might perpetuate white domination and black subordination; and, just as, among whites, the opposition to fundamental political change is not, as it is sometimes supposed, located only in one class (or coalition of class elements), but consists of a broad coincidence of interests of whites of all classes, so, also, among blacks, the rejection of white dominance is not restricted to one class, and there is no class that can be said to be decisively in support of continued white domination, even if somewhat reformed. The basic reason is that both the alignments for conservation and those that demand change are defined, in the first place, in terms of political rather than economic relations. Positions occupied by the various 'races' in the order of domination itself modify the general social effects of the positions they occupy in the relations of production. Perhaps this is so, to a greater or lesser extent, in many other societies. In South Africa the circumstances and the effects of this 'modification' are very particular and important.

To sum up, the social oppression of Africans, as a people qualitatively determined their class and political position. The key question in South Africa is: given the nature of black oppression and the fact that the overwhelming majority of Africans are workers, what role should a Marxist Party play? What those who criticise the ANC/CP alliance fail to grasp, are the decisive conditions which allow a Marxist Party to play a vanguard role in the national liberation struggle — and which give a materialist underpinning to the ideological struggles and organisational norms which underpin the united front of class and national forces. That element is an historically specific class analysis, political line and strategy that can accommodate the forces of national liberation and social emancipation. A working class party does not lead because of the 'purity' of its programme, because it holds 'high' the banner of socialism *à la Inqaba*, or because it is most eloquent at criticising other parties' opportunities — although all these things may be true at one time or another.

> At bottom, a Leninist party leads to the extent that it most accurately assesses the political potential of each class and class stratum in society, best illuminated the tasks at each stage of the working class movement's development; and displays the most skill at grouping together all political forces who can make a positive contribution. A Leninist Party plays a vanguard role when the party has a vision of how each stage is linked to the protracted process of accumulating enough revolutionary force to eventually capture political power (Elbaum, 1987:2).

In other words, in historical development, the working class is never reproduced as a 'naked' proletariat, that is, pure bearers of the capital relation. Labour is always reproduced with historically specific habits and 'needs' and within a social and cultural world whose character is never exhausted by the functional requirements of capital. (Cf. Johnson, 1979, quoted by Bondemann, *et al.*, 1986:10).

EP Thompson stresses that although class experiences are largely determined by capitalist relations of production, class consciousness itself as a way of articulating these experiences is mediated by traditions, value systems, ideas and ideologies like racism etc. Therefore, a concrete, historically given society cannot according to Dos Santos (1970:177) correspond directly to abstract categories. He further states that 'Marxism does not use abstraction formally. After it has elaborated a concept abstractly, it later denies it, showing the limitations of this level of the concept. Hence, the need for passing to more concrete levels "of abstraction".' That is,

> In a concrete society, the development of the means of production and its contradictions gives rise to historically specific social situations (for example at the end of the nineteenth century the capitalist mode of production takes on an imperialist form and today this form assumes a character integrated on a worldwide scale) (*Ibid.*).

The integration of the black workers into the South African political economy and the trade unions they have formed has put on the agenda the question of the democratic rights of the entire black population. The demand to organise trade unions and for their recognition is not merely an economic demand; in South Africa these are political acts which defy the white minority regimes that have tried to reduce black labour into mere units of labour power. The organisation of black trade unions focuses attention to the core of the contradiction — that black labour cannot be divorced from the African as a political and social outcast. It is true that the dialectic of national and class oppression and exploitation became more complex as secondary industry developed, but the continued underpinning of the system of national exclusion and racism only served to increase the alienation, the bitterness and political explosiveness of blacks in South African society.

The Formation of UDF and COSATU

When the UDF was launched, its interim leadership stated, among other things, that 'the main thrust of the organisation is directed towards the participation of the working people in the workplace, in communities, wherever (they) may be'. The inaugural conference expressed its faith in 'the leadership of the working class in the democratic struggle for freedom' and resolved to 'strengthen the unity between genuine democratic trade unions and freedom-loving people in the struggle for political rights' (see Barrell, 1984:).

In the light of these sentiments, it should be obvious that the launching of COSATU at the end of December in 1985 was a major development in the current phase of the struggle for national and social emancipation. The most revolutionary and militant sector of the black community had an organisational focus and was thus better prepared to engage in political struggles than at any period of white minority rule. Despite repression, harassment and intimidation, COSATU has launched strikes repeatedly. In 1987 COSATU launched its 'Campaign for a Living Wage'. This campaign, which faced brutal government reactions, led to a record-breaking wave of strikes and labour actions, and was a tremendous boost to the resistance movement.

The linking of the struggles of the workers' movement to the community-wide struggle was the central theme at the Second National Congress of COSATU held in July 1987. At this congress COSATU adopted the Freedom Charter of the ANC. This act followed similar moves by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU), the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (CCAWUSA) and the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA).

The adoption of the Charter by the mass movement came thirty-two (32) years after it was adopted by the Congress Alliance at the Congress of the People held at Kliptown in 1955. Historically, the Freedom Charter is perhaps the most symbolic document in the history of the struggle for liberation in South Africa. It was initially adopted after the tumultous Defiance Campaign of 1952-53.

COSATU's adoption of the Charter meant that it had accepted the challenge posed to labour by the UDF. In supporting the demands listed in the Charter, COSATU's president Elijah Barayi told the delegates to the Congress:

> We are condemend to the poverty and squalor of township ghettoes — we demand the right to proper housing. Our people are chained to the poverty of rural areas and the tyranny of puppet-controlled bantustans — we demand full political rights in a united South Africa. Our families are torn asunder by the vicious and inhuman system of migrant labour. We demand an end to this system and the right to live and work where we want to. Our children still suffer the humiliation, the insults and provocation of bantu education. We demand the right to proper education and training that develops our human potential. Our land is owned by a small minority. We therefore demand the right to share the land among those who work it.[6]

In adopting the political policy resolution, the Congress pointed out that while 'we are involved in a struggle for national liberation, true liberation can only be achieved through an economic and social transformation of our society to serve the interest of the working class.'[7]

The Charter made it clear that workers in South Africa are not only striving for better conditions in the mines, factories, farms and shops, but for a democratic society controlled by the working people. It adds that there is no conflict between the struggle for national liberation and socialism. The struggles against national oppression and economic exploitation are complementary to each other and part of an uninterrupted struggle for total liberation.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a criticism of the 'left/workist' critique of the ANC/SACP strategy, see Harold Wolpe, 'National and Class Struggle in South Africa', *Africa's Crisis*, 1987, Institute for African Alternatives, London, pp.59-68.
2. For an example of this debate see Isizwe, 'Errors of Workerism', and two trade unionist 'Errors of Workerism: a response', in *The South African Labour Bulletin*, vol.1, No.3, March/April 1987, pp.51-76.
3. On this point, the Programmatic Platform of the Communist Party of Cuba says: 'There is no insurmountable barrier between the democratic-popular and anti-imperialist stage and the socialist stage. In the era of imperialism, both are part of a single process, in which national-liberation and democratic measures — which at times have already a socialist tinge — pave the way for genuinely socialist ones. The decisive and defining element of this process is who leads it, which class wields political power'.
4. For an excellent discussion of this issue see Christus Theodoropoulos, 'Colonialism of a Special Type and Its Implications', in *The African Communist*, No.91, Fourth Quarter, 1982, pp.53-65.
5. When some anarchists in Russia accused the Bolshevik party of putting off the socialist revolution by advocating this first democratic stage, Lenin replied that 'we are not putting it off, but are taking the first step towards it in the only possible way, along the only correct path, namely, the path of a democratic republic. Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other path than that of a political democracy, will inevitably arive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary both in the economic and political sense'. ('The Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution', *Collected Works*, Vol.9, p.29).
6. and 7. For this and the following section see *The New Nation* (Johannesburg), July 23-29, 1987.

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Current Ruling Class 'Post-Apartheid' Perspectives and National Liberation in South Africa
by Rob Davies

The South African liberation alliance, headed by the African National Congress, has long stood for a programme aiming at transforming South Africa into one united nation, embracing all the various ethnic communities currently divided by apartheid. The basic vision of a democratic, non-racial, united South Africa is enshrined in the Freedom Charter, which has repeatedly been shown to represent the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa. The essential precondition for achieving the goal of establishing one united nation in South Africa is, of course, the national liberation of the colonially-oppressed black majority. In the specific circumstances of capitalist exploitation based on national oppression, which characterises the apartheid system, the Freedom Charter recognises that a programme of national liberation has to embrace profound democratic transformations of the economy as well as of political and social structures.

The Freedom Charter is not the only vision of a post-apartheid South Africa, however. The past few years have seen a large number of alternative proposals for a future post-apartheid South Africa emerging from various circles within the dominant classes. The aim of the present paper is to critically review a number of these 'post-apartheid' alternatives. The paper will attempt to show how various proposals embracing such notions as 'power sharing', federalism, 'consociationalism' and 'group rights', while sometimes masquerading as being concerned to protect legitimate cultural, linguistic and other rights would in practice maintain the stranglehold of the existing power holders over economic and/or political power and thus thwart, block or severely limit the attainment of the goal of national liberation of the majority of the oppressed people of South Africa.

The Context of Current 'Post-Apartheid' Discourse
The circumstances in which the question of a 'post-apartheid' future for South Africa has emerged as a major issue of domestic and international debate are well known. The struggles of the peoples of South and Southern Africa in the period since the mid-1970s fundamentally shifted the balance of forces on both the domestic and regional planes of struggle. The advances made by these struggles have thrown the apartheid system into a profound and prolonged crisis. This has been characterised as an organic crisis in the sense that it has revealed deep-seated structural contradictions and has become increasingly widely recognised as unresolved without formative action aimed at restructuring at least some aspects of the system.[1] A mark of the depth of the crisis is the fact that the ranks of those openly proclaiming an adherence to the doctrine of apartheid have diminished dramatically. The Nationalist Party (NP), within which both the term and policies associated with apartheid were originally developed, no longer declares itself to be following a programme of apartheid. Under PW Botha's leadership, the Nationalist Party described its policy as one of 'reform' and senior NP leaders have variously declared apartheid to be 'outmoded', 'finished' or 'dead'. Even some prominent figures on the far right, who regard themselves, rather than Botha, as the legitimate heirs of Malan, Strijdom and Verwoerd, are now couching proposals for 'partition' and a 'white homeland' in terms of a post-apartheid discourse.[2] The term apartheid, in short, has come to mean all things to all people. Rhetorically, at least, it has become, like the plaque, something almost everyone now considers it prudent to shun. Almost every proposal for a future dispensation in South Africa (including even some from figures on the far right) now casts itself, explicitly

or implicity, as 'post-apartheid'. The period between the Vaal Triangle uprising of September 1984 and the declaration of a country-wide state of emergency in June 1986, when the challenge of the Botha regime reached its highest point to date, generated a veritable post-apartheid industry. Virtually every major international and domestic 'interested party' has now put forward some vision of a 'post-apartheid' future for South Africa.

The large number of competing self-styled 'post-apartheid' proposals embrace, in reality, a wide range of differing problematics or conceptualisations of apartheid. Any attempt to categorise and evaluate them has likewise to locate itself (implicitly if not explicitly) within some problematic or conceptualisation of apartheid. No attempt will be made here to review the literature, nor even to describe the various competing 'paradigms' or 'schools' (racial, liberal, radical, Marxist etc). Rather, as a point of departure in approaching the various 'post-apartheid' proposals, we put forward the now widely accepted thesis that apartheid is a system of capitalist exploitation based on national oppression. While the system contains a number of specific features, certain core elements or pillars of apartheid[3] can be identified.

Firstly, apartheid is a system of racist minority rule. It is a system in which the majority of the population are excluded on explicitly racist grounds from all but token, ineffective participation in the political system. Political power is thus effectively monopolised by a minority consisting exclusively of members of one (white) 'racial group'.

Secondly, apartheid is a system in which access to the means of production has, historically, been differentiated according to position in the racist hierarchy and in which, therefore, the vast bulk of the wealth, income, higher-paid jobs as well as ownership and control of the major means of production has become highly concentrated in the hands of a minority of whites.

Thirdly, apartheid is a system in which patterns of land occupation and spatial relations have been structured on explicitly racist criteria. The majority of the people have been prohibited from occupying land outside the bantustan areas. Urban residential space has been segregated and Africans have been prevented from moving freely to urban areas. A racially-compartmentalised system of spatial relations has thus been created and millions of people have been forcibly moved, over the years, to give effect to this.

Fourthly, apartheid is a system of labour controls applied on a racially discriminatory basis. These have ensured that the black population provides abundant cheap labour power for capital accumulation.

Finally, apartheid is a system of repressive social control. Unable to govern by consent, its rulers depend to a high degree on repression and coercion to maintain themselves in power.

The emergence of all of the above elements of the apartheid system was historically interlinked. South Africa is a capitalist society divided into classes, but race has been the concept around which relationships in the state have been structured. Rights of citizenship have varied with 'racial category' and, indeed, in the Verwoerdian scheme the majority of the people were declared not to be citizens of South Africa at all (only of one of ten ethnic 'homelands'). This categorisation has greatly affected the process of assigning agents to particular places in the social division of labour. In the phase of primitive accumulation, in which the present pattern of ownership and control was established, different categories of whites used their exclusive

access to political power to gain control of means of production at the expense of blacks. Laws were passed excluding blacks from occupying land outside designated 'reserves'. These laws effectively 'released' large areas of the most fertile land for exclusive occupation by whites. Blacks, who did not have political rights, were subjected to a number of racially discriminatory pass laws, labour laws etc, whose objective was to compel them to make themselves available as low-paid workers. After 1924, and particularly after 1948, state intervention of various kinds was directed at promoting the specific interests of particular capitals — initially industrial and agricultural capital, later an ethnically-defined 'Afrikaner capital'. It was thus through explicitly racially discriminatory measures that the current patterns of ownership and control over the means of production were established and there is no doubt that what has been called the 'exploitation colour bars' — exploitative measures directed exclusively at blacks — were the *sine qua non* on which capital accumulation in South Africa developed and depended.

How far the reproduction of the social and economic aspects of the system have now become endogenous and how far they depend on continued racist minority control over the political system is one of the major points of debate within 'white politics'. The position on this question varies in part according to class. In very general terms, the major monopoly corporations with their accumulated capital and economic power do not consider continued white monopolisation of political power to be as essential as the more vulnerable sections of the white petty bourgeoisie and white labour do. The latter fear that any abandonment of racial exclusivity will lead to a loss of privileges. However, this generalisation is subject to a number of qualifications. Afrikaner monopoly corporations (Sanlam and Rembrandt), although controlling vast assets, still benefit from particular forms of state patronage and support. There are also many corporations involved in arms production. These 'interests' too have shown themselves to be wary of any change which might put their particular privileged access to state patronage in question. The positions of the oppressed and exploited majority also vary to some extent according to class. Among the small stratum of black capitalists and petty bourgeois, there is perhaps a certain tendency to look towards a future in which capitalism exists without racism. Among the working class, by contrast, there is a strong thrust towards wanting to see the elimination of apartheid oppression accompanied by a transition to a society not characterised by exploitation — i.e. for socialism. However, whatever the different emphases, there is a broad general recognition among the masses of the oppressed that changing the political system will not on its own be sufficient. There is little faith in the power of the 'free market' to rectify the injustices and inequalities of apartheid. Even many black capitalists, who generally tend to look more to the disadvantages they suffer compared to their white counterparts than to the advantages they possess vis-à-vis black workers, seem to have arrived at the conclusion that unfettered market forces would merely lead to the reproduction of existing patterns of economic power. In the specific conditions of apartheid capitalism, a broad consensus thus exists among the vast majority of the nationally oppressed that national liberation must necessarily involve democratic transformations in the personnel in government. The basic programme is the Freedom Charter. It follows from this that achieving national liberation implies that a new government which emerges should have the will and capacity to effectively intervene to rectify social and economic inequalities generated by apartheid, including those relating to the existing patterns of ownership and control of the means of production.

It is against the above described background that the various self-styled 'post-apartheid' proposals emanating from circles within the dominant classes have to be examined. Since, as we indicated above, the Botha regime is among those presenting its programme as one which would 'move away' from apartheid, it is perhaps necessary first to examine such claims before moving on to various other proposals which more explicitly style themselves 'post apartheid'.

The Botha Regime's Programme: 'Power Sharing Without a Transfer of Power' or 'Reformed Apartheid'

The Botha regime's 'reform' programme is firmly rooted in the notion that South Africa is not and cannot become one nation. Like all its predecessors, the present Nationalist regime argues that South Africa is a multi-national country consisting of a white nation, 'coloured' and 'Asian' national groups and 10 separate black (African) nations, all of whom are minorities. What distinguishes the present Botha regime's position from that of its predecessors is that it has been forced by the advancing popular struggle to acknowledge that classical Verwoerdian apartheid is incapable of resolving the crisis confronting the apartheid system and state. The Verwoerdian political strategy was of course based exclusively on the bantustan system. Africans would be given political rights in one of ten ethnic 'homelands' together comprising 13% of the total land area of the country. This would be an alternative to acceding to the demand of the national liberation movement for equal political rights for all South Africans in one unitary state, and would guarantee continued white domination over the 87% of the country defined as 'white' South Africa. The Botha regime's 'reform' programme is based on an acknowledgment that the bantustan system can no longer serve as the exclusive basis of any political strategy capable of dealing with the current crisis. In particular, the regime has recognised that the bantustans have failed to 'accommodate' urban blacks. Its programme thus seeks to establish a number of alternative structures, which it seeks to promote as fora for effective political expression and participation by blacks. The regime remains of course staunchly opposed to majority rule. Ideologically, it continues to 'justify' this by resorting to the argument that South Africa is a country of national minorities. More appropriate in such circumstances, the regime claims, is a political system based on the delegation of a high level of responsibility for 'own affairs' to representative structures of individual national groups and 'power-sharing' bodies to deal with 'general affairs'.

While the regime claims that its policies abolish 'hurtful discrimination' and provide for a system in which 'no one group dominates any other', a closer examination reveals that provision for continued racist minority domination is carefully built in at each level. This can be illustrated by examining the latest constitutional proposals which the regime is currently trying to impose. These provide for a hierarchy of 'own affairs' and 'general affairs' structures operating at different levels or tiers of government.

At the bottom of this hierarchy are racially-segregated local authorities, with the 'Black Local Authorities' (BLAs) as the most important building blocks of the system. These are due to be put in place by the elections scheduled for October 26. The new BLAs are intended to take the place of the previously existing BLAs, largely destroyed by a combination of mass action and armed struggle in the 1984-6 period. Indeed, one of the central objectives of state strategy in the period since the declaration of a country-wide State of Emergency in June 1986, has been to reimpose administrative apparatuses of the apartheid state in black residential areas. According to some sources, current state strtegy in this respect sets out from what is known as the '20:30:50 formula'. According to this, 20% of blacks are 'radicals' supporting revolutionary change, 30% are 'moderates' interested only in improving their material standard of living and the remaiing 50% are undecided waverers. The aim of state strategy is thus to smash the 20%, buy off and encourage the 30% and in this way win over the undecided 50%. The detentions, bannings, military occupation of townships and

the insertion of military-dominated 'Mini Joint Management Committees' are among the measures directed at the perceived radical minority. The October 26 elections are part of the process of 'winning the hearts and minds' of the 'moderates'. The black municipal authorities which will be 'elected' on October 26 will in practice be subordinated to military-dominated bodies operating within the framework of the National Security Management System, but they will be channels for state funds (partly raised by 'privatising' state corporations) which will be spent on various 'upgrading projects'. These upgrading schemes are particularly targeted at those black residential areas which had been areas of major 'unrest' during 1984-6 and are intended to provide material support to encourage 'moderates' in these areas to assert themselves against 'radicals'.

The strategy envisages that once the BLAs are in place, they will be drawn into joint bodies with white municipalities known as 'Regional Service Councils' (RSCs). These are supposed to handle 'general affairs' at local level. Representation on the RSCs will, however, be based on the income of each component local authority. The BLAs will thus be under-represented and the 'white' authorities over-represented in terms of their relative population sizes. The RSCs, like all other 'general affairs' bodies, will, moreover, operate according to principles of 'power sharing' rather than 'majoritarianism'. This will mean that while in principle BLAs will 'have their say' on RSCs, in practice white municipal authorities will not be bound to accept anything they do not agree with.

In addition to the RSCs, the regime is also proposing to establish nine 'Black Regional Councils', bodies for Africans, operating at the level of the nine 'development areas' into which the country is divided for the purposes of industrial 'deconcentration' policies. The BRCs will take over some of the tasks currently handled by provincial executives. PW Botha has indicated that elections for the BRCs may be held next year, although this will probably depend on how the October municipal elections are viewed. The regime has also said that it is open to the idea of establishing a national black 'own affairs' authority once the BRCs are in place. This will not, however, be linked to the present tri-cameral parliament (where the three chambers of parliament act as national 'own affairs' bodies for whites, 'coloureds' and Asians.) The reason for this is simple. If a 'fourth chamber' of parliament were added, it would upset the delicate arithmetic of the present system in terms of which the 'white' chamber has a permanent built-in majority with four votes to every two of the 'coloured' and one vote of the 'Asian' chamber. Instead of becoming part of the parliamentary system, it appears that the national black 'own affairs' council will be constituted as a separate extra-parliamentary body with delegated powers.

The regime also plans to revive and modify earlier proposals to establish a negotiating council (whose name will be determined by the members themselves, and which PW Botha has proposed could be called the 'Great Indaba'). The role of this council will be 'to negotiate a new constitution and in the interim give blacks a say in general affairs matters at national level'. It is to be made up of nine ministers, officials and nominees of Botha; representatives of the three chambers of the tri-cameral system and of the six 'non-independent' bantustans; and nine nominees of, or delegates from, the Black Regional Councils.

Finally, the regime has introduced legislation to allow blacks to be appointed to the Cabinet and the electoral college that chooses the State President. Any blacks so appointed will not be members of parliament but will serve as co-opted 'outsiders' nominated by the State President. During his budget vote in parliament in April 1, PW Botha said that any African appointed to the Cabinet would have to have proven administrative experience (which, in the South African context, almost certainly means someone with a background in the Bantustan system).

He also said that, initially, he/she would be appointed at deputy minister level probably to the portfolio of Education and Training (African education). In a speech in the 'coloured' House of Representatives, Botha made it clear that any black member of the Cabinet would have to be bound by the notion of 'collective responsibility', i.e. would be obliged to defend and support Cabinet decisions outside.

An article by Mark Swilling of the University of the Witwatersrand's Centre for Policy Studies, published in the July 22-28 edition of the *Weekly Mail* said that one scenario which is being floated in government circles runs as follows. Once all the above structures are in place, PW Botha would resign as leader of the Nationalist Party and exercise his powers as State President to suspend parliament for a year in terms of Section 38 of the constitution. The negotiating council — or 'Great Indaba' — would then be named as a 'transitional government' and it would use its mandate to review all legislation during the suspension. After a new constitution was drawn up, parliament would be recalled to approve it. If all this went according to plan, the Botha regime would have achieved its goal of being seen to have 'negotiated' a new constitution with blacks and to have 'multi-racialised' the government. It would, moreover, have done this without involving the ANC or other democratic organisations. In reality, of course, this procedure would still slave the existing regime in 'ultimate control'. The negotiating council or 'great Indaba' would have a built-in majority of Botha confidantes and advisers and the whole process would involve co-optation of actual or potential allies rather than negotiation with adversaries. Nonetheless, it would bring some black faces into the administration at various levels and is thus seen by its proponents as something which could undercut domestic and international pressure.

Swilling was criticised by Steven Friedman in an article published in the July 29-August 4 edition of the same newspaper. Friedman argued that Swilling had presented an image of coherence and strategic foresight, which the Botha regime was unlikely to possess. Rather than being part of a 'grand plan', Friedman suggested that the various pieces of 'reformist' and repressive legislation currently before parliament could be seen as a reflection of incoherence and continuing inability of the regime to chart a clear course in view of the contradictory pressures on it. Nevertheless, Friedman acknowledged that some version of the 'transitional government' option is being floated by certain forces within the regime and that in general a great deal is being staked on successfully imposing the various proposed structures.

An examination of current plans shows that they do not envisage anything beyond the regime's long-standing formula of 'power sharing without a transfer of power'. While the various new structures would bring some 'black faces' into the system, they would simultaneously ensure that ultimate control remained in the hands of the existing racist minority regime. At no point would the various bodies created for Africans be able to assert themselves as representatives of the majority of the people. A rejection of what is termed 'majoritarianism' has been shown time and time again to be the regime's bottom line. It is not prepared to contemplate any changes which would lead to its losing 'ultimate control' over the political system in the country. The regime's spokespersons may declare that they are seeking to establish structures of negotiation, but in reality what the regime seeks to establish are structures of consultation and co-optation. Blacks drawn into the system may 'have their say', but at the end of the day the existing regime would have a veto. Since its project aims at maintaining the ultimate control of the existing racist minority regime over political power it cannot in reality be regarded as a 'post-apartheid' programme, even though its ideologues occasionally employ such an ideological discourse. It is a programme to maintain apartheid under the changed conditions of struggle of the period since the mid-1970s.

Ruling Class 'Post-Apartheid' Alternatives

Having rejected the Botha regime's claims to be following a 'post-apartheid' programme, we can now approach the larger number of alternative 'post-apartheid' plans, proposals and scenarios put forward by other forces within the dominant classes as well as by various academics and 'experts'. Despite their individual diversity, most proposals emanating from such quarters can be recognised as variations on a common theme which can be described as 'power sharing after a transfer of power'. Proposals of this nature gained ground among influential forces within the dominant classes in the context of the perceived failure of the Botha regime's 'reformed apartheid' programme. Before about 1984/5, when 'reformed apartheid' was still seen to have some chance of resolving the crisis, many of the same forces gave considerable credence and support to the regime's 'reform' programme. A typical earlier attitude was that expressed by the then Anglo American Chairman, Harry Oppenheimer, in 1980:

'Since we're not going to get the Nationalists out of power so quickly — much as I'd like to see the Progressive-Federal Party come in — one has got to find a means of doing social justice in a way that the reasonable people in the Nationalist Party might go for.'[4]

It is essentially the perceived failure of 'reformed apartheid' that has led such class forces to look for solutions beyond the parameters acceptable to the 'reasonable people' in the Nationalist Party. It is thus no coincidence that a veritable flood of 'post-apartheid' proposals began to emerge from such quarters in the 1984-6 period, precisely when the surge forward in people's struggle fueled the perception that apartheid was vulnerable.

The basic difference between 'reformed apartheid' and the proposals being discussed in this section lies in the fact that proponents of the latter have come to a recognition that long term stability can no longer be guaranteed on the basis of racist minority rule. Like the regime's 'reformed apartheid' programme, many set out from a view that formative action aimed at creating a new support base among the middle strata of the nationally oppressed was essential if stability was to be restored. Proponents of the types of 'solutions' being discussed in this section concede, however, that this is now only possible on the basis of multi-racialisation of the government. They thus accept the need for a transfer of political power to a new government, which will not be exclusively constituted or dominated either by the NP or any other white minority party. Such proposals are thus 'post-apartheid' in terms of the first pillar of apartheid defined above. They are less clearly so in relation to the others. Generally they seek simultaneously to ensure that any new government which emerges to replace the present regime is severely constrained in its capacity to challenge the fundamental interests of monopoly capital. Specific proposals of this type vary quite widely in terms of the degree of manipulation involved in determining who becomes whom in the government, and with respect to specific constraints and guarantees sought. (A matter of some considerable relevance in considering the prospects of political work among such forces — a point which we shall return to in the conclusion).

The reason for the ambiguity and divergence in many of the specific proposals of this nature has to be located, in the first instance, in the nature of the 'break' between monopoly capital and the Botha regime. If these forces now have differences with the Botha regime, they also have long-standing serious reservations about the democratic movement. Above all, it is not any inherent inability to co-exist with racist minority rule that has forced them to look for alternatives. They have co-existed profitably with the system for years. Rather it is a perception forced on them by the developing struggle that racist minority rule can no longer guarantee stable conditions for capital accumulation. The latter is the principal strategic objective sought

by these class forces and it is a 'political solution' which will best guarantee stability for capital accumulation in the long term that monopoly capital is now seeking. In the concrete conditions of struggle which have emerged in South Africa, monopoly capital has shown a degree of vacillation normally attributed only to the petty bourgeoisie. It is at that moment in the struggle when the challenge from the democratic movement is felt most intensely that the greatest distancing from the regime occurs. At moments, such as the present Emergency phase, when the regime appears to be more in control the distance is notably much less.

The limitations of monopoly capital's current positions can perhaps be summed up as follows. While this class force has shown some indication that it is prepared to contemplate a post-NP negotiated settlement (something which cannot be ignored and indeed needs to be encouraged), it has not shown any sign that it is itself willing to do much to bring about a move towards any such situation. Neither domestic monopoly capital nor imperialism have, as yet, given any indication of being prepared to put their considerable class power behind any attempt to dislodge the regime or force it to create a climate for negotiation. They have thus not yet entered the terrain of creating change. At the same time, however, they have made it abundantly clear that if and when people's struggle forces a shift on to that terrain they will be actively involved in struggling to try to ensure that a post-NP negotiated settlement does not seriously affect their interests. They thus appear to be more involved in preparing a strategy for struggle on the terrain of the construction of a post-NP society (where the principal adversary will be the democratic movement), than in acting to create the conditions for a move on to such a terrain.

All of these factors are reflected in, and partly explain, the divergent forms in which specific proposals in this category have been put forward. Some are presented as broad visions or scenarios, evidently intended to win general ideological support for a process of post-apartheid reconstruction led by monopoly capital, rather than to serve as a specific agenda of demands to be put forward in the event of a negotiated settlement. This is the case of the study commissioned by the Anglo American Corporation and authored by Clem Sunter.[5] The Sunter study presents a highly idealised, almost Utopian vision of alternative 'scenarios' for South Africa in the 1990s. South Africa could embark on the 'high road' to becoming a 'winning nation', or it could descend to the 'low road' leading to regional conflict and a 'wasteland'. Embarking on the 'high road' is seen as depending on initiating a process of 'joint negotiation', in which all parties who will participate in the future negotiate it. 'Joint negotiation' implies that all parties are equal and that there is mutual give and take. Under such conditions 'synergy' (the energy of synthesis) is released and the final product often ends up better than any of the individual parties originally conceived. Through 'joint negotiation' a situation is reached in which alliances are increasingly formed on the basis of individual interest rather than ethnic group identity. The other essential elements of the 'high road' are seen to be 'small government' 'decentralised power' and 'minimal sanctions'. These are all regarded as essential to achieve acceptable levels of economic growth without which it will be impossible to overcome prejudices and fears which could impede negotiation. The route to the 'low road' is that of co-optation rather than negotiation. Instead of inviting 'all the cooks into the kitchen', the regime draws in on its own terms only those who agree with it. It begins by redistributing income to those it co-opts in order to buy their support, but it then is forced to retreat into authoritarianism when this produces a rightwing backlash. Co-optation also implies 'controlled economy' and 'centralised government'. Moreover, since it does not generate an internal consensus sufficient to resist international sanctions, it is also the road of increasing sanctions. Eventually all these

factors combine to produce a climate of increased confrontation and conflict. The economy declines and South Africa descends into a spiral towards wasteland and regional war. The favoured 'high road' scenario thus envisages negotiation and a move away from a political system structured on the basis of ethnic groups. At the same time, however, Sunter puts forward a clear, if sometimes implicit, vision of a future in which existing patterns of ownership and control of the means of production are largely left intact.

Unlike other well-known would-be organic intellectuals of the capitalist class,[6] Sunter does not base his case on any explicit appeal to the alleged virtues of the 'free market'. Rather he puts forward a pragmatist 'end of ideology' type argument. He calls on South Africans to stop arguing over 'this-ism' versus 'that-ism' and instead adopt an approach based on 'a bit of each-ism'.[7] This implies something which could be described as a 'mixed economy', but it is a vision of a mixture of a very definite type. This emerges from the characterisation of a 'winning nation'. The specific example, repeatedly cited, is that of Japan, where the role of the state in relation to the economy is compared to that of a football team coach. 'We offer tactics, provide the right environment and make sure the pitch is in excellent condition. We don't own the stadium but we keep it in good shape and those guys out there — they win the matches. They're the champions. We don't command them, we help them'.[8] Apart from 'small government', a 'winning nation' also has an educated population, a work ethic, social harmony and mobilised capital. In addition, it has what is termed a 'dual logic' economy. The 'first logic' economy is that of the big companies. This is where growth and income are generated and a nation's position in the international league is determined. However, since new technological advances are not labour-intensive, it is not going to provide sufficient jobs for a growing population. For these it is necessary to look to the 'second logic' economy, that of small businesses including the so-called 'informal sector'. It is here that employment is generated. In a 'dual logic' economy, the two develop a close relationship through sub-contracting to small firms by big ones. In effect, what is being argued is that the deficiencies and inequalities created by the 'first logic' economy should be rectified in and through the 'second logic' economy. The monopoly corporations would continue to dominate the 'first logic' economy. They would be left to set their own agendas, and government would relate to them as a 'football coach'. This presumably would also be capitalism's contribution to the 'bit of each-ism'. The 'second logic' economy is where the state would be involved. It would channel some support and maybe even own a few concerns. If there is to be any socialist contribution to the 'mixture of isms', it would come in here. In reality, of course, however it is described, the role of the 'second logic' economy would be to serve the 'first logic' economy. It would therefore be dependent on and subordinated to the monopoly-controlled 'first logic' economy. Sunter's formula is thus nothing other than a new version of the hoary old 'dualism' thesis. As is the case with all versions of this thesis, the characterisation of 'dual economy' serves to conceal underlying relations of domination/subordination and exploitation. In the context of the existing racial character of the social division of labour in South Africa, it is difficult to see how this formula could be interpreted as other than telling the vast majority of those who are currently defined by apartheid as 'second class' citizens to confine their expectations of democratic socio-economic changes to the 'second logic' economy.

The aim of a presentation like that of Sunter's is to gain broad general ideological support for a process of negotiation taking place under the hegemony of, and within parameters defined by, monopoly capital. He gives no indication as to how the regime is to be brought to the terrain of negotiation politics (other than being persuaded by his own talk). Neither, at the

level of abstraction at which he operates, does he put forward any constitutional model. Indeed, Sunter deliberately refrains from making any specific proposals, suggesting that the appropriate constitution for South Africa will emerge from the negotiating process. At one level this could be seen as a positive element, indicating a willingness to accept the decisions of a future constituent assembly, at which 'all the cooks are present'. However, the image of the negotiating process he puts forward is highly idealised and in fact unreal — professional negotiators build confidence, each side wants to see the other strong, there is lots of give and take and 'synergy' is released. In reality, of course, the outcome of any negotiating process depends, partly, on the balance of power established in the struggle leading to negotiations and, partly, on the strategy and tactics of the various parties in the negotiating process itself. Monopoly capital is not indifferent about the type of constitution it would like to see in a post-apartheid South Africa. It will enter any negotiation process with a strategy and tactics to achieve defined goals. Indeed, the experience of the 1987 miners' strike shows that the Anglo American Corporation is not averse to 'playing hard ball' to get its own way.

The fact that no firmly agreed constitutional model has yet been put forward by representatives of monopoly capital is in part a reflection of the continued vacillation *vis à vis* the Botha regime. There is still a residual hope or expection in many circles that the regime itself will come up with something workable. Beyond this there is a general view that constitutional negotiation is still some way off. If and when such a time comes, the type of constitutional proposals to receive the firm support of this class force will almost certainly depend to a considerable extent on the perceived correlation of forces existing at that time. A number of specific presentations already put forward do, nevertheless, indicate something of the general preferences and broad direction of proposals drawing support from 'business'. In fact that there was originally a high level of agreement with the Botha regime's 'reformed apartheid' programme is also reflected in the degree of overlap between many of the basic themes and concerns. Thus, among the main themes which have emerged are 'group rights', minority vetoes and entrenched bills of rights and a general preference for an electoral system based on proportional representation. Two main models incorporating such notions have appeared: consociationalism and confederation.

The term 'consociational democracy' is associated with the US-based political scientist, Arend Lijphart. Its proponents less often boast about the fact that its one test in practice was the case of Lebanon. It is supposed to be a form of democracy applicable to 'plural societies' without well-defined territorial divisions and aims at constructing a 'grand coalition of political leaders of all significant segments of the plural society'.[9] It should be noted in parenthesis that members of the Nationalist regime have from time to time also spoken in favour of 'consociation', although its principal advocate, Dennis Worrall, is now associated with the 'Independent movement'. 'Consociation' is in fact based on highly élitist and authoritarian principles. The coalition is of leaders. These are drawn into structures which force them to seek compromises with each other. The principal relationship of these leaders to their base becomes to 'sell' the compromise. This indeed is its major weakness, even in its own terms. It only works if the base accepts that its relationship with leadership is largely confined to receiving orders and directives. The system broke down in Lebanon precisely because the base no longer accepted an exclusively 'top-down' relationship with its leaders. Lebanon thus entered a political crisis because the leaders of the grand coalition no longer controlled their bases.

Various proposals for federalism or confederalism have also been put forward. There is considerable overlap between some of these and aspects of the regime's 'reformed apartheid'

programme. They generally set out from the base of the existing local authority system. They may not specifically insist that their current racial exclusivity continues to be reinforced by law, but they generally implicitly accept the underlying *de facto* racial division of existing local authorities and seek to delegate considerable 'own affairs' powers to them. Representatives of these bodies are then drawn in various ways into federal or confederal national level bodies. A model which has considerable support in some circles is that of the Swiss cantons. Apart from tilting the balance of power decidedly in favour of local authority structures, it is a system of 'small government' and thus considered particularly suitable by the champions of 'free enterprise'.[10]

One proposal, which would strengthen 'regional government' but which is also seen as a possible model for national level government, is that put forward by the KwaNatal indaba. In a certain sense this combines elements of 'consociation' and 'confederation'. The indaba began meeting in late 1985 and produced its proposals for a unitary regional government embracing the KwaZulu bantustan and 'white Natal' in November 1986. The indaba received widespread support both from Natal-based capital and monopoly capital in general. It therefore merits particular attention. It also prominently involved Buthelezi's Inkatha movement as the main 'negotiating partner' for these forces. There would be a two-chamber legislature. The first would be elected by universal suffrage on a party proportional basis. The second would consist of representatives from five 'background groups' — English, Afrikaans, African, Asian and 'South African'. (The last category would cater for those who did not wish to be classified according to racial categories). The cabinet would be formed according to the number of seats won, with the proviso that no party could nominate more than half the cabinet members. Special 'cultural councils' would also be established by the 'background groups' in the second chamber. Matters affecting 'cultural questions' would have to be referred to these for approval. There would also be a legally enforceable Bill of Rights protecting, above all, cultural and property rights. Finally, the supreme court would have full powers of verification and enforcement of the constitution and Bill of Rights.

The KwaNatal indaba proposals have many of their own specificities. They were intended to cement a relationship between Natal-based capital and a known ally Inkatha. The principal beneficiaries of the arrangement would be capital, whose existing positions and interests would be guaranteed by entrenched clauses, and 'those members of the (black) trading petty bourgeoisie who have benefited from closer co-operation with big capital (as well as) members of the professional and civil service fractions ...'.[11] The latter would benefit from greater openings in 'white' Natal and opportunities for patronage from the regional government. Also important is the fact that the indaba proposals relate to regional rather than national government.

Nevertheless, a number of principles of more general applicability can be distilled from the indaba proposals. The indaba proposals would, in principle, permit the party which gained majority support from an electorate not defined, at least in relation to the proposed first chamber, on a racial basis, to play a leading role in government. If applied at the national level this would undoubtedly mean that the Nationalist Party would lose its dominant position within the legislature. In this respect it would imply a transfer of power. (This, incidentally is what led to the indaba proposals being rejected by the regime. Its spokespersons said they were unacceptable because they were based on principles of 'majoritarianism'). However, the electoral system would be based on a form of proportional representation. Psephologists are generally agreed that such systems lead to over-representation for minority parties (in terms of the relationship of majority parties). This is in contrast to the 'first past

the post' system, currently in force in South Africa, where majority parties are over-represented and minority parties under-represented in terms of seats held. In those countries of western Europe where proportional representation systems are in force, coalition governments are the general rule and the state is weak in relation to civil society. Moreover, under the indaba proposals, even if one party did, like ZANU-PF which contested elections under a similar system, manage to win an overall majority, it would not be able to form a government on its own. It would have to assign at least half the ministerial portfolios to representatives of other parties. It would then have to contend with ethnically-defined 'cultural groups' in the second chamber with veto powers over key questions. The thrust of proposals like those emanating from the indaba is thus to force a party which represents the majority to share power with minority parties. In addition, any such 'power-sharing' government would be forced to accommodate itself to the demands of ethnically-defined councils asserting their 'group rights'. Finally, it would have to abide by a legally enforceable 'bill of rights' entrenching, above all, property rights.

Proposals of the type discussed in this section thus generally envisage a change in the first pillar of apartheid as defined above, although even this is qualified in a number of cases by the imposition of 'power sharing' and some concessions to 'group rights'. They are much more ambiguous in terms of the other pillars of apartheid generally envisaging a high degree of continuity with present economic and social structures with any change being incremental and largely affected through deracialising market relations. This is not surprising given the class forces from which they have emerged. However, some differences are notable in terms of the degree of manipulation about who becomes what in a new government and what it can do once in power. Some would seek to impose rigid guarantees to ensure 'power sharing after a transfer of power'. Others are less rigid, appearing to be willing to leave decisions on social and economic policy to future negotiation, although as we have already suggested it would be prudent not to take some of the idealisations of 'negotiation' which have been put forward at face value.

4. Conclusions

The present paper has examined a number of different types of post-apartheid proposals emanating from various circles within the dominant classes. It has shown that many of these seek to construct what is described as a 'post-apartheid' dispensation on the basis of such notions as 'group rights', 'own affairs', confederalism and consociationalism. The ideological justification for this is usually couched in terms of some notion of national pluralism. They therefore reject the idea that South African can become one nation. This paper has argued, however, that while the ideological justification may be cast in terms of a professed concern with protecting the legitimate language and cultural rights of minorities, the effect of such proposals, in practice, would be to concentrate considerable veto powers in the hands of the existing power holders. They would, in fact, therefore take advantage of the existing high correlation between position in the racial hierarchy and socio-economic or class location, to construct devices masquerading as mechanisms to protect linguistic, cultural and national group rights to block or limit changes in the existing patterns of ownership and control. In the case of the Botha regime's 'reformed apartheid' policies, these would be such that the present racist regime would retain 'ultimate control' over the political system. They would thus prevent a transformation even of the first pillar of apartheid — racist minority rule. In the case of the second category of 'post-apartheid' proposals discussed above, some change in the first pillar is contemplated but under terms and conditions which would place existing power-holders in a position not only to freeze capitalist property relations in general,

but also to block, or at least severely limit, the capacity of a new government to address itself to many of the specific inequalities generated by apartheid.

It is not necessary in a forum of this nature to establish the point that apartheid capitalism is based on acute inequalities and rooted in the ruthless exploitation of the nationally-oppressed black majority. Some of its effects on the economic conditions of the people are nevertheless worth repeating. According to recent estimates:

- 5% of the population owns 88% of the wealth;[12]
- Over half of all households receive an income below the least generously-defined 'poverty line';[13]
- Over half of the African population (13.1 million out of a total of 24.1 million) is forced to subsist in the bantustan areas; 81% of households in these areas receive an income below the 'minimum living level' while 13% receives no income at all; the average landholding per family in the bantustans is 1 hectare (ranging from 0.2 ha in QwaQwa to 1.5 ha in the Transkei) but this is highly unevenly distributed and many households have access to much less than the average and even no access to land at all.[14]
- At least 3 million people (between a quarter and a third of the labour force), and possibly even twice this number according to some estimates, are unemployed; most of the unemployed can be identified as 'surplus' to capital's requirements; 3.5 million of such 'surplus people' were forcibly removed to the bantustans between 1960 and 1983.[15]
- Between 30 and 70% of African school-age children are underweight while 22 to 66% have stunted growth due to malnutrition;[16]
- 7.4 million urban African residents live in 446 000 'small housing units' with an average density of 16 inhabitants per unit. The officially estimated 'shortage' of housing units in 1986 was 221 572 units outside and 281 269 units inside the bantustan areas.[17]

Such statistics highlight some of the 'practical' problems which will confront a democratic, non-racial government in a liberated South Africa. It will have to find answers to acute problems of poverty and to rectify deep seated inequalities. Moreover, it will have to do this under circumstances in which the inherited economic system will almost certainly be in an even deeper state of crisis than it is already. It will not be a case therefore of inheriting a 'healthy' economy which is neutral in relation to the system of national oppression. On the contrary, a democratic, non-racial government will inherit an economy which is both rooted in the system of national oppression and in a state of acute crisis.

It is well known that the Freedom Charter contains proposals for addressing the economic as well as political and social dimensions of national oppression. More precisely, an examination of the Charter's 'economic clauses' will reveal that the Charter envisages:

- Profound changes in the pattern of control of the economy;
- A radical land reform programme sufficient, at least, to banish land hunger;
- Substantial improvements in conditions of workers with guaranteed employment, increased wages, a 40 hour working week and full trade union rights;
- An extensive social welfare programme.

Although there is some confusion on this point, it has been stated repeatedly that the Freedom Charter is not a socialist programme, even though it has been described as being 'not incompatible' with socialism. The essential strategic aim of the transformations envisaged in the Charter is, in fact, democratisation not socialisation. The inclusion of economic clauses in the Charter is based on a recognition of the basic reality that, in the specific conditions of capitalist exploitation based on national oppression which lie at the heart of the system of apartheid, democratisation will not be achieved unless the transformations brought about in the national democratic stage also embrace profound changes in the material base of national oppression.

Our movement is well aware of the fact that the types of transformations envisaged in the Freedom Charter will not all be accomplished at a stroke. Implementing them will be a process. We are acutely conscious, too, of the disasters that have befallen revolutionary movements which have concentrated on 'baking slogans instead of bread' during the transition phase. There is also recognition of the fact that taking control of the economy implies accepting responsibility for managing it. The movement's recognition of the necessarily protracted nature of the process of realising the economic and social objectives of the Freedom Charter is reflected, *inter alia*, in the clause in the recently-released 'Constitutional Guidelines' stating that there will be a 'mixed economy' in a liberated South Africa. More than that, our movement has argued that the pace and content of particular measures will depend on the balance of forces existing at the time of liberation and should be the result of decisions taken through processes which provide for the full democratic expression of the will of the people.

This again is reflected in the 'Constitutional Guidelines'. The clear priority in the 'Guidelines' is to seek to create mechanisms and structures for wide democratic participation by the people in decision-making and for the translation of democratic decision into practice. This goes far beyond creating mechanisms allowing merely for the exercise of the occasional right to vote at national elections. The 'Guidelines' envisage delegating considerable decision-making powers to local bodies precisely in order to encourage and promote democratic participation. They also provide for the granting to workers of extensive rights, including the right to organise and to strike etc. At the same time the 'Guidelines' leave the question of the precise character of the economy and of economic policy much vaguer. This is not because the movement believes that all will automatically be added once 'the political kingdom' has been gained. Nor is it fundamentally because the ANC has not yet formulated a clear economic policy for a liberated South Africa. Rather it is because of the movement's deeply-held view that these are matters which have to be decided by the people through processes of democratic consultation and expression.

The fact that a number of forces within the dominant classes are now speaking in terms of a post-apartheid discourse is an encouraging development. It is, in the first instance, testimony to the advances made by our people's struggle. Also encouraging is a tendency in some of the more recent formulations to downplay insistence on constitutional 'blocking mechanisms' and indicate an apparent willingness to accept the outcome of decisions reached in a negotiation process. Much, of course, remains unclear and unspecified: negotiations with whom over what? The ANC has made clear its position on this issue. In a statement issued by the National Executive Committee (NEC) in October 1987,[18] the movement reaffirmed its willingness in principle to enter into 'genuine negotiations' whose objective would be the transformation of the country into a united, non-racial democracy. At the same time, it indicated that any 'genuine negotiations' would depend on the prior creation of 'a climate conducive to negotiations'. This would have to include '... the unconditional release of all political prisoners, detainees, all captured freedom fighters and prisoners of war as well as the cessation of all political trials. The state of emergency would have to be lifted, the army and the police withdrawn from the townships and confined to their barracks. Similarly, all repressive legislation and all laws empowering the regime to limit freedom of assembly, speech, the press and so on would have to be repealed'. The document also reaffirmed that '... the African National Congress is opposed to any secret negotiations. We firmly believe that the people themselves must participate in shaping their destiny and would therefore have to

be involved in any process of negotiations'. In addition, as argued above, it is necessary not always to take idealised visions at face value. Thus, the Anglo American Corporation which has held up current industrial relations bargaining processes as a model for a political negotiating process, is not averse in practice to manoeuvering in ways which belie its expressed desire to see give and take, strong opponents etc.

Nevertheless, current trends do indicate certain possibilities for political work aiming at enlarging the ranks of forces for change.

First, these forces in the dominant classes now looking for 'post-apartheid' alternatives must be encouraged to accept democratic procedures. They will be constitutionally guaranteed the right to put their view on a 'post-apartheid' economy in open debate through a democratic system, which will allow for the existence of various parties, provided only that they do not constitute themselves on a racially exclusive basis or promote fascism or nazism. Equally, however, the people have the right to opt for alternatives and not have one model thrust on them through manipulation of constitutional devices masquerading as measures to protect language and cultural rights. The choice between economic alternatives should in short be accepted by all sides as something to be decided through a process of ideological struggle and open debate and not by constitutional manipulation.

Second, such forces should be encouraged to see that their influence and role in the construction of a 'post-apartheid' future will be related to some degree to the extent to which they are seen to be active in the struggle against apartheid now. They should thus be encouraged or cajoled to move on to the terrain they have thus far resisted, that of creating change.

Notes and References

1. See J.Saul and S.Gelb, *The crisis in South Africa*, London, Zed Books, 1986.
2. While the far right has traditionally based its policies of 'partition' on the existing 87%:13% territorial division of the country, a minority current within the far right has more recently proposed in effect, to turn the formula around. This tendency argues that it is impossible to maintain white domination over the whole of the country outside of the bantustans. It proposes, therefore, that part of this territory, including some of the most industrialised areas, should be negotiated away to a 'multi-racial' or 'black-dominated' future in return for recognition of an exclusive white 'homeland' in only part of what is currently defined as 'white' South Africa. This current, associated with figures like Carel Boshoff of the Afrikaner Volkswag implicitly if not explicitly, styles itself post-apartheid and therefore merits some discussion here. As Boshoff put it, 'The classic policy of separate development seems to be a highly impractical ideal because of, among other reasons, black occupation of South African land, external pressures, internal concessions and the business sector's support of a black takeover. In addition, in a common society, the Afrikaner volk is too thinly spread to control the whole of South Africa. The Afrikaner cannot live together with the black masses and lead them to a destination determined by him. He simply does not have the numbers and power to enforce such a destiny. He can only choose and realise his own destiny' (quoted *The Star* 27/6/1988). Boshoff's South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) has put forward proposals for the borders of its proposed 'volkstan'. It would include the south western Cape, northern Natal, the OFS, 'white areas' of the Transvaal, but not the Witwatersrand, and southern Namibia. This is still a sizeable part of the country (and includes part of Namibia) but it is less than the whole of the territory outside the existing bantustans. Only whites would have rights of residence in the 'volkstan' and its economy would be run exclusively on the basis of white labour. Though interesting as a reflection of the fact that the changing balance of forces between oppressor and oppressed has forced even some diehard Verwoerdians to restrict the horizons of their herrenvolk ambitions, these types of proposals can easily be recognised as a utopian and defensive reaction located firmly within the problematic of apartheid.
3. The term 'pillars of apartheid' is borrowed from Robin Cohen, *Endgame in South Africa?*, London, James Currey and Unesco Press, 1986. There is also some overlap, but not an identity, in the characterisation of the pillars of apartheid below.
4. Business International *Apartheid and Business: An Analysis of the Rapidly Evolving Challenge facing Companies with Investments in South Africa*, Multiclient Study, Johannesburg, October 1980, p.230.
5. Clem Sunter, *The World and South Africa in the 1990s*. Cape Town, Human & Rousseau Tafelberg, 1987.
6. Leon Louw and Felicity Kendall, *South Africa: The Solution*,
7. Sunter, op cit p.36.
8. Ibid p.44.
9. Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977.
10. This is 'the soluion' put forward in Louw and Kendall, op cit. Louw is executive director of the 'Free Market Foundation'.
11. Gerhard Mare and Georgina Hamilton reply to Charles Simkins' review of *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of 'Loyal Resistance'* in *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, no 15, June 1988.
12. Quoted in C.Simkins, 'How much Socialism will be needed to end poverty in South Africa?'. Paper presented at conference on 'The Southern African Economy after Apartheid', University of York, England, September/'october 1986 (hereafter York conference).
13. Ibid.
14. South African Institute of Race Relations, *Race Relations Survey 1984*, Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1985, pages 184/5, 568/9; M. Cobbett, 'The Land Question in South Africa: A Preliminary Assessment', paper presented at York conference.
15. *Race Relations Survey 1984*, op cit, page 244; The Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons, *Mission to South Africa: The Commonwealth Report*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1986; Human Awareness Programme, 'Information 1987: A Folder of Facts and Figures on South Africa', Grant Park, 1987; L.Platsky (on behalf of the National Committee against Removals): 'Reprieves and Repression: Relocation in South Africa', *South African Review* 3, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986.
16. *Race Relations Survey 1984*, op cit, pages 358/9.
18. 'Statement of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the Question of Negotiations, October 9th, 1987'. The quotations in this paragraph are all taken from this document.

The Nation, Democracy and Ethnicity
by Z. Pallo Jordan — February, 1989

In a recent paper Professor Herman Giliomee argued that the South African conflict is best understood as a clash between two rival nationalisms, Afrikaner Nationalism and African Nationalism, both of which lay claim to a common homeland. This was essentially a recapitulation of his argument advanced in an open letter to an ANC member, published in *Die Suid Afrikaan* during 1988.

He supports his contention by marshalling evidence that as perceived by the majority of whites, especially the Afrikaners, the issue is one of self-determination. By this they (whites) mean the retention of their distinctive lifestyle, a sense of their origins and identity, the psychological satisfaction of group life as a distinctive community — which must include the right to separate (perhaps even exclusive) schools — and sufficient control over the allocation of resources to ensure the continuity of these.

Giliomee consequently dismisses the arguments of Marxists, African Nationalists and liberals who have portrayed the conflict as one between a disadvantaged black majority and a privileged white minority from whose ranks the decisive property-owning classes are drawn. He asserts that unless and until the conflict is understood in his terms an enduring resolution will elude the principal actors.

Giliomee distinguishes between two forms of nationalism. One he designates as **ethnic nationalism**, the other as **territorial nationalism**. Though he at times suggests a symmetry between Afrikaner and African nationalism, he concedes that African Nationalism is closer to territorial nationalism. His principal concern is, however, Afrikaner Nationalism. Regarding it he argues that those historians and social scientists, working in the historical materialist tradition, who have sought to understand and analyse Afrikaner Nationalism with reference to the material basis underlying the ideological are in fact guilty of crude economic reductionism, since they ignore or refuse to take into account the innumerable ideological and psychological drives that give an ethno-nationalism its strength. Because the ANC subscribes to this view, he contends, its strategy tends to disregard the well-springs of white (especially Afrikaner) group consciousness or ethno-nationalism in the mistaken belief that rational economic considerations will compel a sufficient mass of Afrikaners to come to terms with the inevitability of majority rule. This misplaced confidence in reason, by his account, is the basis of the ANC's sanguine expectation that its victory is inevitable.[1]

have in the past had occasion to take issue with Giliomee's attempts to place African Nationalism and Afrikaner Nationalism on the same moral plane[2]. I shall not return to these themes here. The circularity of his argument completely eludes him. He fetishises ideology — apparently it can only be understood by reference to itself. Thus the whites' self-definition includes their aspiration to have 'sufficient control over resources ... to ensure the continuation of these benefits'.[3] In spite of himself Giliomee has to admit that Afrikaner ethno-mobilisation had amongst its first principal objectives control over material assets which would raise the Afrikaner from his former status of economic and social subordination to the Anglo-South Africans. The possibility that present-day claims, expressed in terms of the preservation of an identity and specific status, translate into the retention of palpable economic and other material advantages accruing from political dominance, appears also to escape his notice.

Giliomee's misconceptions regarding the historical-materialist interpretation of Afrikanerdom are not the result of ignorance. He is evidently familiar with the work of the adherents of this school. We consequently have to search elsewhere for an explanation. I shall return to this later.

South African Marxist social scientists insist that the social-productive relations by which it is organised are the most important feature of our society. They have argued also that political and social power, in the last instance, flow from control over the productive apparatus. With other Marxists they hold that history is a process of dialectical self-development of of human society and therefore every society contains within it the seeds of its own transformation. Lastly, they insist that the notions that should shape historiography are to elucidate the forces that have created the present and continue to act on us as humans living and struggling in our time, and by comprehension of these forces rationally act to change the world.

There can be no denying that 'in the last instance' is an elusive and slippery concept. Consequently, economic determinism and reductionism have been (and continue to be) the bane of much historiography in the Marxian tradition. Engels warned that:

> Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base. It is not that the economic position is the cause and alone active while everything else only has a passive effect. There is, rather, interaction on the basis of economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself[4]

having been largely ignored. However, this weakness in Marxist social science in no way lends credence to the equally ridiculous attempts of conservatives and liberals to explain history in terms of ideas and psychological motives of great men and ethnic groups.

Marxian social scientists would nonetheless insist that ideologies are not arbitrary constructs. They are and can only be comprehended as the product of definite socio-historical circumstances, determined by their character as instruments in political and social struggles.

Thus it has been argued that the ideology of apartheid is incomprehensible outside the historical context of the special type of colonialism that prevails in South Africa. The national liberation movement had identified a handful of core features of this 'colonialism of a special type' (CST) which have remained essentially constant in spite of the various modifications that have, from time to time, been introduced in order to adapt the system to changing circumstances.

Firstly, CST is a system of white minority rule in which the black majority are statutorily excluded from the political process. Political power, except for some marginal delegated powers, is explicitly the monopoly of the white minority which bases its claims on race as the primary legitimating factor.

Secondly, it is based on the conquest and dispossession of the indigenous peoples of their land and its wealth. This dispossession has itself been institutionalised in formal legislation. Consequently, access to the decisive sectors of productive land is racially determined to the advantage of the white minority.

Thirdly, it is a system of labour coercion, underpinned by a host of extra-economic measures that were specifically designed to compel the African people, 75% of the population, to make themselves available as cheap labour.

Fourthly, it is a system in which access to productive capacity and property is racially apportioned to the benefit of the white minority at the expense of the black majority. This has resulted in a skewed racio-social structure in which the property-owning classes are drawn almost exclusively from the white minority.

Lastly, it is a system of repressive social control. The black majority are explicitly ruled as a conquered people who can claim no rights other than those the dominant white minority are willing to concede.[5]

Life would indeed have been much simpler if one could read the real meanings of what politicians said by merely examining the words they pronounced. It is because we recognise that this is not so that we have had to evolve science and political theory.

It might be instructive for liberal scholars to refer back to the English Revolution. Writing about the important role religious ideology played in that struggle, a contemporary writer commented:

> The very Arcanum of pretending Religion in all Wars is that something may be found out, in which all men may have an interest. In this the Groome has as much interest as the Lord. Were it for Land, *one has 1,000 acres, the other but one: he would not venture so far as he that had a 1,000. But Religion is equal to both. Had all men Land alike by a Lex Agraria, then all men would say they fought for Land.*[6]

That historians in the 20th century fail to grasp this essential aspect of ideology as the representation of special interest as as the general interest would merely be amusing if the consequences of their myopia were not so grave.

Nationalist ideology is about the creation of inner frontiers and consequently sets great store in homogenising factors such as territory and language. It claims that its object — the national community — is a natural (even divinely-ordained) phenomenon defined in terms of a common experience, ancestry, sometimes territory, culture, etc. It can potentially move in two opposite directions — separation and isolation, on the one hand; or seek to integrate and homogenise disparate elements, on the other hand. While historical materialists would reject the extravagant claims of nationalist ideology and insist that each specific nationalism bears its unique stigmata, rooted in history, as a means of intervention in specific historical struggles, they nonetheless recognise that the historical actors who are called into action by a nationalist movement are motivated by a great number of considerations, all or none of which may be reducible to the economic. The task of the social scientist is to decipher the motives, conscious and unconscious, explicit and implicit, and not succumb to the temptation of literalism, *à la* Giliomee, who charmingly advises us that none of the Afrikaner politicians he interviewed mentioned the interests of big business as among their principal concerns.

In general, Afrikaner Nationalism was the response of the Afrikaner petit bourgeoisie and intelligentsia to the destruction of the Boer republics and the industrialisation of South Africa. The loss of their political independence threatened to submerge the Afrikaners in a cosmopolitan, industrialising society dominated by English monopoly capital. Industrialisation, with the Afrikaner wage-earners entering the job market amongst the least skilled, held out the prospect of Afrikaner wage-earners detaching themselves from the 'volk and kerk' dominated by the petit bourgeoisie as they established new points of contact within their urban milieu. In South Africa, where the whites enjoyed a special status as members of a dominant race, the convergence between racial ideology and a narrow ethno-nationalism proved relatively easy.

The bearers of the nationalist ideology were small property owners and related strata amongst the Afrikaners, whose livelihood depended on the preservation and elevation of that community's distinct language, church and other institutions for the advancement of their careers. By manipulation of the symbols and totems of the Afrikaner's past they contrived to cocoon their community from the influences of its cosmopolitan environment. The means was the elaboration of an ethno-nationalism, which, while it could not address the economic subordination of the Afrikaner wage-earner, at least palliated his alienation by defining an ethnic home for him in an otherwise hostile world. Recognition of the articulation between ideology and the distinct class forces that gave it birth is central to the task of deciphering its meaning. Understood in these terms, Afrikaner Nationalism is neither mysterious nor an intellectual savage survival, but rather precisely a product of modern life with a basis in that reality.

There can be no denying, however, that the ideology finds its emotional appeal in the past — one need merely study Dr DF Malan's notorious 'Quo Vadis' speech to verify this. It is this that persuades me that the essential thrust of Afrikaner Nationalism is anti-modernist. Whether or not Afrikaner politicians recognise it, Afrikaner ethno-nationalism is the instrument of Afrikaner bourgeois ideological domination over the Afrikaner wage earning classes.

My purpose in this paper is threefold. Firstly, I hope to demonstrate that unlike its Afrikaner counterpart, African Nationalism is a liberatory, modernist, political outlook, whose material basis is the common society built by the collective endeavour of all South Africans. Secondly, that the development and emergence of this revolutionary nationalist ideology, associated with the national liberation movement, is rooted in the struggle and grew through struggle — both within the larger society and within the evolving national liberation movement. Lastly, that a whole range of objective social and economic forces militate towards the forging of a non-racial South African identity, in which are fused elements from all the population groups that comprise South Africa. This integrative impact of the developing forces of production and exchange is, however, consistently undermined by capitalist social productive relations underpinned by the institutions of national oppression.

African Nationalism too developed as a response to conquest. It developed and became effective as the African petit bourgeois intelligentsia, who are its bearers, grew away from the colonial state. This pattern of development is recapitulated in the self-definition of this petit bourgeoisie. The black petit bourgeoisie at first defined itself as the protégé of British imperialism, but experience and necessity gradually compelled it to distance itself from the imperial connection. By the time of the 1905 Native Affairs Commission, both white business and political leaders had come to regard the black petit bourgeoisie as the chief threat to their ascendancy.

The manner in which both the black petit bourgeoisie and the white rulers had been transformed by the preceding five decades is best understood by analogy with India. As in India British colonialism had destroyed the indigenous civilisation and states to make room first for agrarian and then later industrial capitalism.[7] The principal architects and designers of the reconstituted black communities that came into being during the second half of the 19th century were the petit bourgeoisie intelligentsia. With a remarkable facility for syncretism they created a culture to give meaning to the lives of their communities from the remnants of pre-colonial African culture, and borrowings from the Europeans and invariably had to invent new elements in conformity with the prevailing circumstances. Their pre-eminence was in part assisted by imperial policy, which at first regarded them as a stalking horse that could be employed to undermine the authority of traditional leaders.

The major institutions for socialisation into the modern context — the churches, schools, the press, formal and informal organisations — were controlled by this petit bourgeoisie. Acculturation thus unfolded as a process guided by them and largely on their terms. This accounts for the extraordinary ideological hegemony of this stratum in modern black communities despite its puny numbers.

The values and mores of this petit bourgeoisie were quintessentially the product of the transition from pre-colonial

to colonial society. Their development harmonised with the reconstitution of black communities made possible by industrialisation and urbanisation. In the urban areas new opportunities arose for the mixing of blacks from various social, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Here education, training, wealth and other achievements were the measure of status rather than lineage and descent. New points of contact and association based on economic, social and political activity in their new environment assisted in forging a new identity as members of an oppressed people. The jettisoning of traditional values in favour of modern ones made way for a more diverse cultural milieu which also offered greater opportunities for the energetic and talented. At the same time urbanisation had a homogenising effect on the total society. As blacks adopted the values of modern capitalism so too the area of shared values and mores between themselves and the rest of their fellow citizens was enlarged.

Objective socio-economic forces conspired with the project of the petit bourgeoisie to unite, under its leadership, blacks from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Homogenisation has already created black communities in which people drawn from varying ethnic stocks share the same religious beliefs, attend the same church, work at the same jobs, belong to the same trade union, play the same games, read the same newspapers, enjoy the same films and observe the same morality in their family and community lives. The degree and extent of homogeneity grows with increased urbanisation and in turn breaks down ethnic particularism and sectional identities. As the members of this urbanising black community restructure their identities to take account of the new roles existence in a modern economy imposes on them, so too the significance of particular language communities and ethnic backgrounds assume diminished importance in the manner in which they conduct their lives.

The Struggle Within the Struggle
It has been said that the development of the South African economy carries a strong integrating impulse. Less evident are the equally powerful countervailing forces, expressed in the institutions of CST, which also derive from the development of capitalism. Capitalist development in a colonial context had at hand innumerable instruments to assist it 'in creating a proletariat'[8], the colonial state to break it into the discipline of capitalist production, and the ideology of Victorian racism as legitimation. Its history is itself an instructive study in the interpenetration of the juridical, ideological and economic necessity.

The central contradiction of CST is rooted in the historical development of the capitalist mode of production in our country. Unlike its European counterparts, the capitalist classes in South Africa came into being as the offspring of colonialism and imperialism. From its inception South African capitalism stood on the shoulders of European achievement - it was massive inflows of capital from Europe that set the mining revolution in motion; it was the British colonial state that intervened to create infra- structure; it was the colonial state, too, that foisted unity on the divided ruling classes through war.

But it was precisely this that determined South African capitalism's peculiar relations of dependence on imperialism. The emergent capitalist classes sought to restrict access to their economic and social status by racial exclusivity. Law, custom and the mores of British colonialism in Africa were harnessed to deny blacks access to various forms of productive property. The first measures affected the mines, but these were incrementally extended first to commercial agriculture, and then specific professions and trades, commerce and manufacturing. The 1910 Act of Union was the first step towards the rationalisation of these into a comprehensive system which legally entrenched the status of blacks as conquered and colonised peoples. All whites, including the recently-landed immigrant and even the beggar, were racially defined as members of an exclusive community, collectively endowed with certain prerogatives. At the core of

CST stands this dominant contradiction, between the colonised black majority and the white colonial state, the National Question.

Racial oppression, whose most recent guise is apartheid, is thus inextricably linked to the entire history of the capitalist mode of production in our country in which it features as the chief means of securing the processes of capitalist accumulation. The symbiotic relation between racial domination and capitalist economic exploitation, the two supporting each other like the warp and the woof of a fabric, is central to my thesis. Thus contrary to the view that the racial, ethnic and tribal barriers erected by the state are dysfunctional to the purposes of capital, I would argue that they are of the essence of the system **as it has evolved in the South African context.** Apprehensions about the radicalising impact this relation can and has had on black libratory politics informs present-day attempts to delink the two.[9]

The struggle for national liberation consequently has to grapple not only with the political order but must, as **an integral aspect of its project, also address the restructuring of the economic order. As Nolotshungu has cogently stated: '...whether it mobilised in nationalist terms or in socialist terms, it entails repossession and dispossession, the seizure of material assets, as well as the restructuring of political power'.**[10]

It is recognition of this hard reality that has compelled layer after layer of political spokesmen on behalf of the ruling white bloc to resist or seek devious means of evading real empowerment of the majority. It is primarily this consideration that is at the root of Giliomee's insistence that Afrikaner ethno-nationalism is merely another variant of a universal psychological urge to cohere as members of a unique ethnic or national community. This particular line of special pleading neither shocks nor dismays us. What is especially repulsive, however, is his attempt to purchase its legitimacy by drawing parallels with African Nationalism.

The non-racialism and anti-ethnic ethos of the national liberation movement, when examined in the light of the above considerations, is therefore not just a matter of high moral principle but an imperative dictated by the struggle itself. This should not, however, create the impression that its endurance as a feature of our movement has been unproblematic. The national liberation movement has had to contend not only with the empirical facts of racial discrimination but also with the consequences of state-sponsored racial, ethnic and tribal segmentation of our society. The movement has not one-sidedly been able to act upon South African society, as structured by the white minority regime: it, too, has been the object of forces and political currents generated within and by the prevailing racist order. As a result both the social forces that the national liberation movement has sought to mobilise and the strata from which it originally drew its leadership, have had to engage in a process of political struggle and contestation to arrive at the high ground our movement presently occupies.

The national liberation movement has itself been a site of intense politico-ideological struggle which entailed the self-definition of its political programme, strategy and tactics. Though such struggles have assumed a number of forms, and involved differing levels of intensity, they were a necessary and healthy feature of the process of maturation. The inclusion of the issues of poverty, hunger, insecurity and economic exploitation as part of the agenda of the national liberation movement was the outcome of intra-movement political contestation. Inevitably the less deprived strata tended to downgrade their significance, while the economically disadvantaged insisted on their elevation. It has usually been in the context of such political struggles that elements from among the petit bourgeoisie have been tempted to manipulate residual ethnic and sectional loyalties as a means of mobilising support for what would otherwise be an

unattractive elitist agenda. Africanism, of the variety associated with the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, at one time represented such a current within our movement. It was effectively resisted and politically defeated, in spite of its evident emotional appeal, because in the intra-movement political debates that ensued the majority of the movement's membership and constituency were able to discern the elitist aspirations the bombastic rhetoric concealed. The intermittent appearance and decline of such tendencies in the national liberation movement should therefore be no cause for alarm. This is the inevitable concomitant of the dialectics of struggle within the struggle.

African Nationalism, or more precisely, the revolutionary nationalism espoused by the national liberation movement, differs fundamentally from any form of ethno-nationalism, racial chauvinism or ethnic particularism not only in the breadth of its vision but also as the political expression of a universalist libratory outlook, moulded and tempered in the heat of struggles against racial domination and within the ranks of the movement.

A Truly Democratic Dispensation

In this paper I have argued that the development of capitalist productive forces in South Africa has created a common economy, towards which all South Africans (and many non-South Africans) have contributed. The economic unification of the country has spawned a number of centripetal forces which have conspired to produce a common South African society, despite the racial and other divisions imposed by the state. Concurrently the productive relations, structured and determined by the colonial context in which they emerged, reproduce a racial hierarchy which has been institutionalised as CST.XThe issues of democracy and national liberation, on the one hand, and racial oppression and ethnicity on the other hand, have come together in acute fashion. The attitude one adopts to these two sets of issues defines distinct class commitments. Our movement holds that national liberation and democracy are inseparable. But, if democracy is to serve the purposes of national liberation it must entail the empowerment of the oppressed and exploited popular classes — the black majority. The institutional form this democracy assumes therefore has become crucially important. It is in this regard that our perspective on ethnicity and ethno-nationalism is no longer incidental but central to the realisation of the goals of the national liberation struggle. As has been stressed earlier, this cannot be reduced to the mere modification or adaptation of the system of racial oppression to render it more accommodative to elements of the black élite.

Perhaps the best approach to unravelling the inter-relationship between these two sets of issues is to delineate what empowerment of the popular classes should minimally entail.

The Freedom Charter, adopted at Kliptown in 1955, remains the seminal statement of the goals of the national liberation movement and has recently been adopted by an increasing number of sectors of the mass democratic movement. In very broad terms it sets out an agenda for a democratic state whose principle objectives would be the uprooting of national oppression. Empowerment, understood in the terms laid down in the Freedom Charter, would therefore entail the institution of political democracy through a universal adult suffrage and the outlawing of all racist practices and laws. The Freedom Charter also envisages the radical restructuring of key aspects of the economic order, affecting mining, the banks and land, in order to destroy the material basis of white racist power structure. The document then addresses the crucial area of civil liberties and the second generation of human rights - freedom from want; security in one's person, one's health and the right to a livelihood, education and culture. Understood in these terms, empowerment means a political dispensation which would enable the popular classes to secure these by active participation in the political process. To be meaningful, such participation must yield results, and its impact should not be thwarted by convoluted constitutional mechanisms.

It is this vision of what empowerment must entail that should inform our attitude towards ethnicity and section group interests. No democrat would advocate insensitivity towards the sense of grievance experienced by all black ethnic communities and language groups with regard to the relegation of their language and the corruption of their culture. I would, however, argue that the redress of these need not entail granting special constitutional recognition to ethnicity or politicising language and culture. More specifically, the democratic traditions offering constitutional and other special protection to ethnic and linguistic minorities were designed to secure the rights of oppressed groups whose rights were otherwise threatened by dominant oppressor groups. Latter-day attempts to appeal to the authority of this tradition as a means of sheltering the privileges of an oppressor group not only does violence to the tradition but is also a patently fraudulent exercise.

To return once again to Herman Giliomee and his special pleading on behalf of Afrikaner Nationalism. It is my contention that Giliomee lacks the courage to openly proclaim his partisanship for white privilege and has therefore developed his elaborate theory as an alibi or disclaimer. Afrikaner Nationalism is discredited internationally as the author of apartheid. While one may pity Giliomee the thankless task of attempting to rehabilitate this political obscenity, one cannot avoid the conclusion that he is, in the last instance, on the opposing side.

It is self-evident to us that the racialisation of the South African polity is a key aspect of the problem. The ethnic- communal solutions Giliomee proposes would be disastrous if they were adopted. At the bottom of Giliomee's theorising is a profound scepticism about the ability of the libratory forces to overthrow the apartheid regime. He has, therefore, cast about for a second-best solution - which however is no solution at all. Ironically it is he, rather than myself, who has chosen to ignore the history of post-1945 ethnic-communal conflicts. In virtually every case where the 'solution' has been to seek an accommodation through a 'voluntary apartheid',[11] the conflict has deepened and become more intractable. I would submit that the emergence of a common, non-racial, non-ethnic South African patriotism will become a real possibility once the material and political basis for it has been created. The conquest of power by the popular classes is the sine qua non for the unfolding of that process.